Reviewer's report

Title: Critical Appraisal Skills of Family Physicians in Ontario, Canada

Version: Date: 10 October 2003

Reviewer: Roger Edmund Thomas

Reviewer's report:

General: This is a straightforward and sensible piece of research which states a clear question, uses appropriate methods, interprets the findings accurately (neither under- nor over-stating them) correctly, and states the limitations of the study. Usually a study with a 30% response rate would not be published, but the authors have explained the limitations and interpretations of the 30% response rate. It is slightly wordy, and some text could be shortened.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Minor Compulsory Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Page 5: Explain why you asked them to state two things (rather than all the criteria they could think of) - what are the effects on the conclusions?

Page 5: For each of the lists about the RCT, diagnostic test and systematic review, in the list of questions I would add the research question the authors asked, because the quality of the question and the ability to phrase it in an answerable manner affects the entire publication.

Page 6: One explanation for the poor performance of the academic physicians in this study is that often one person on a faculty designates her or himself or is designated by the other faculty to teach EBM, while the rest coast along and let their skills atrophy.

Minor typos:

Page 3 line 14 and line 18: patients'
Page 4 line 1: based
Page 4 line 9: participants'
Page 5 bottom line: change; presence of meta-analysis was done to: meta-analysis was done
Page 6 first line: of the results
Page 6 second line: respondent was asked
Page 6 line 6; data... were [datum is Latin singular, data are plural]
Page 6 line 13: decrease
Page 6 line 15: yes, respectively
Page 7, line line 7, surveyed, 53
Page 7 line 9: program, deceased
Page 7 line 15: result
Page 7 line 17: RCT's [apostrophe because it is an abbreviated plural noun]
Page 7 bottom line: than those of RCT's
Page 8 line 12: add space between majority and (  
Page 9 line 7: physicians, evidence
Page 9 line 14: physicians
Page 9 line 15: did but the highest score was 8.5
Page 10 line 4: is that the
Page 10 line 9: one's
Page 10 line 12: of Ontario physicians
Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

What next?: Accept after minor compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

None