Reviewer's report

Title: Resident Interest and Factors Involved in Entering a Pediatric Pulmonary Fellowship

Version: 1 Date: 20 April 2004

Reviewer: Sat Sharma

Reviewer's report:

General

This is an important study investigating the choices that the residents make in selecting a subspecialty for further training. Not much is known in this area and specifically whether having a sub-specialty in an institution influences resident's decision is not known. However the study is performed in one institution and the results cannot be generalized to all programs or all residents. Furthermore the n is too small to make definitive conclusions about any of the aims of the study.

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

The paper makes you think that the study was planned prospectively in 1992, but it appears that the survey was repeated in 2002 and compared to the previous survey, and the results collated and reported. This must be made clear to the readers.

A second resident from 1992 who initially went in to critical care fellowship and subsequently completed the pulmonary fellowship should also be taken in to account. Which group did he belong to (+PF or –PF)?

The authors should address why 11 to 19% considered doing pulmonary fellowship but an extremely small number actually did. Were all the residents accounted for in order to determine the actual career decisions? Did any of the residents move away to do pulmonary fellowship? Were opportunities available to go for pulmonary fellowship? When did the lone resident actually join the fellowship program?

Could it not be that the residents indicated their interest to do pulmonary fellowship, because they knew that the pulmonary fellowship director conducted the survey. The residents probably did not wish to disappoint the director specifically when their lunch was paid for. A survey conducted anonymously would have taken this bias out.

I think there are a number of other possible confounders here, which may have affected decision to not choose pulmonary fellowship; therefore, to draw a conclusion that presence of pulmonary fellowship program did not generate interest in pursuit of pulmonary fellowship is inaccurate.

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------

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

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests: None