Reviewer's report

Title: Clinical undergraduate training and assessment in primary health care: experience gained from Crete- Greece

Version: 1 Date: 27 February 2005

Reviewer: Howard Tandeter

Reviewer's report:

General

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

This group of educators from Crete informs us about their experience in the adoption of primary care into their undergraduate curriculum and analyzes the students™ write-ups as a mode of assessment of their training. I applaud them for being pioneers in their country in this important area.

After reading this article twice I was unable to decide on acceptance or rejection. I therefore suggest a "major compulsory revision" of this article before making that decision.

The following are my questions and suggestions to the authors:

1. Why are the authors reporting an event that occurred 11 years ago? And while doing so, why are they using the expression "this innovative training"? Is this still innovative 11 years latter? Did the program continued? Did it change in the following years or was kept as described here? Did the assessment showed to be useful/ effective? Was the idea adopted by other medical schools around Greece since then?

2. It is not clear for which public was this paper written. If it is a message for an international audience, the authors should include in their discussion some comparison with existing programs around the world. If it is a message for "health planners and regional authorities" I don't think this will be of interest for an international audience (the one aimed by BMC).

3. The quality of written English of this article is relatively low, making it sometimes difficult to understand. It should be edited for language corrections. It should also be shortened (it is difficult to read and gives the feeling that the same message could be given cutting the word-count in half).

4. The authors should have clear what the objectives of their publication are:
   a. To report their first data?
   b. To validate their evaluation model?
   c. To recommend their evaluation model to others?
   d. To describe things that affect medical students™ training in PHC?

5. The potential reader of this article will have to go trough a very prolonged and complicated description of the statistical methods used in the analysis of this "new assessment scale" to read at the conclusion section: "In conclusion, irrespectively of the results of this, the mere fact that medical students were exposed to the new stimuli is of great sense". So my question is: are the results of
the statistical analysis the real "theme" of this article? Should the article deal with the statistical analysis or simply present the fact that students in Crete were exposed to these stimuli?

6. If this article is to be re-written it should choose the "real important message" it wants to transmit and should not diverge. If the choice is made, the discussion should be extended in that specific area (the innovation, the assessment, the national issue, or the international comparison)

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: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'