Reviewer's report

Title: What Motivates Senior Clinicians To Teach Medical Students?

Version: 2 Date: 27 March 2005

Reviewer: Patsy Stark

Reviewer's report:

General
Overall this is an interesting paper that adds to the understanding of the subject. While I am not familiar with Q methodology, from this paper it appears to be an interesting method which may well be used to triangulate with other qualitative methods.

In the discussion section there was a good disclosure of the limitations of the study but please see my comment on potential bias below.

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

The abstract results section clearly shows the results of the demographics of the study’s participants. However, given the importance of the abstract to those who may wish to access this paper, the authors should make the results of the study more evident.

Reference 3 in the text is Hertzberg but in the reference list it is Covington. Hertzberg doesn’t not appear on the reference list and this should be corrected.

Add the date the referenced website was accessed.

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

Ethical research is important. The authors should state whether or not they applied for and were granted research ethics approval from any body. For example in the UK this kind of research requires NHS research ethics approval.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

These comments really relate to clarification of details included in the papers, which the authors should consider seriously to make the paper more easily understandable, especially to those less familiar with the research methodology.

The group of clinicians that contributed to the construction of the statements – How many were there? What were the demographics (you emphasise the demographics of the study participant but that information is not available for the original group.)? Was the group representative of the eventual sample or were there unique characteristics of this group?

Clarification of these points is important to demonstrate that there was no bias at this stage of the research.
Bias – The authors should consider a further discussion about their personal approach to the study participants. Different members of the research team gave the instructions to different participants. Was there any possible bias in this process?

The authors say that the data was anonymous but that seems unlikely given the fact that the researcher returned to the participant after 10 minutes to collect the cards and record the data.

Factor analysis:
This section is not as transparent as other aspects of the research. I suggest that the authors give each factor a title or label as well as the number for greater clarity; it is easy to get lost here. (As one would do in creating/naming themes in grounded theory)

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:
I declare that I have no competing interests