Reviewer's report

Title: Addressing Inaccuracies on Emergency Medicine Residency Applications

Version: 2 Date: 9 July 2005

Reviewer: Elisabeth Paice

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Addressing Inaccuracies on Emergency Medicine Residency Applications
Katz et al

1. This is an important piece of research, meticulously planned and well-described, and of interest to anyone engaged in the selection of doctors for training and the probity of the medical profession.

2. My points are all discretionary.

3. The title is misleading as the paper is about the detection of inaccuracies, rather than addressing them. It was clearly the intention of the researchers to monitor referrals of inaccurate applications to the appropriate authorities, but as they report, a database flaw prevented that from happening.

4. ‘Inaccuracies’ or ‘errors’: Since error implies inadvertence, and since the authors point out that they are unable to infer intent, but that many of the errors worked to the advantage of the applicant, the use of the word ‘error’ rather than ‘inaccuracy’ should be avoided, except in the case of the well-defined ‘benign error’.

5. The method was well-planned, well-described and appropriate.

6. A minor point is that I am not sure that inaccurately quoting page numbers in a reference is necessarily a ‘benign error’ in that a brief letter or abstract may be made to look like a more substantial publication by extending the page range.

7. I was not clear about the significance of the statement in the method that more than one inaccuracy might be found in each publication. The reported inaccuracy rate in the results was based on the number of peer-reviewed papers with inaccuracies in them, not the number of inaccuracies. This could be clarified.

General

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

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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?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare I have no competing interests