Reviewer’s report

Title: Exposure to the field of renal transplantation during undergraduate medical education in the UK

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Reviewer: giorgina B piccoli

Reviewer’s report:

The paper by A. Edwards, A Newman and J Morgan regards a very important general issue, that is the role of the Medical School in the students’ choices for their medical profession. The interest in this general issue is enhanced by the analysis of the “dose” of education (or of lack of education) in one of the most critical and interesting fields, that is renal transplantation (being a Nephrologist, this may be indeed a biased opinion). The main advantage of the study is the novelty and the high response rate from the Medical Schools.

- Major Compulsory Revisions

The main limit is the analysis of the “delivered dose” only, without any correlation with the students’ opinions or with the outcome of interest (enrollment of surgeons in the renal transplantation field). While this outcome was not considered in the survey, indirect data could be available (for example, the number of transplant surgeons coming from the settings where the cultural exposure to transplantation is higher). If no data is available, this point could at least be discussed shortly. Furthermore, the discussion takes only in consideration the transplant surgeons, while several other experts are involved in the field of transplantation. It would be of interest to mention how is the situation as for renal medicine, including the needs for urology and nephrology specialists, and how is the situation as for other transplants, as liver or heart transplants. The merely descriptive study design and the lack of discussion of the potential interest outside of the UK are further limits, that could be shortly addressed in the discussion.

- Minor Essential Revisions

The figures and tables 2 and 3 could be omitted, as they provide few data, that could be summarised in the results. The discussion is rather long; it could be shortened, allowing the integration with the data required in the previous paragraph. In the background, the sentence “renal transplantation is the first choice treatment for most patients with end-stage renal failure” should be modified, as in most settings less than 40% of the patients with kidney failure are transplant candidates.

What next?: Accept after minor essential 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.