Reviewer’s report

Title: Learners’ Decisions for Attending Pediatric Grand Rounds: a qualitative and quantitative study

Version: 1 Date: 29 January 2006

Reviewer: Michael Allen

Reviewer’s report:

General
The paper is clearly written and understandable.
I am familiar with the literature on grand rounds and the concerns about its declining appeal and value. The question addressed by this paper is important. However, I have concerns about the methods, particularly the questionnaire:
1. No estimate is given of the response rate. I expect it is very low but knowing how many were mailed out would help determine that.
2. Entertainment value of rounds was mentioned as an inducement to attend in the interviews but was not included in the questionnaire.
3. A Likert scale type of questionnaire may have provided more information than a simple yes/no choice.
4. There is no mention of the questionnaire being pilot tested.

Other points are:
1. In the interviews, did the authors explore the role of discussion at grand rounds since this is mentioned in some of the references cited?
2. There is no data from people who did not attend rounds. This plus the problems with the questionnaire lead me to question the scientific validity of the paper.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. Abstract – page 2 – text in Results is the same as in Methods.
2. Page 5 – final paragraph – should specify how many physicians and non-physicians usually attend rounds. This will help put the numbers of interview participants and questionnaire respondents in context.
3. Page 6 – paragraph 1 – should specify how many retired physicians were invited to attend.
4. Page 6 – final paragraph – should specify if the questionnaire was pilot tested for face validity. I realize that it’s not always possible to test questionnaires exhaustively before administration, but they should be reviewed by some potential respondents. It may have been better to use 5-point Likert scale rather than a simple yes/no choice.
5. Page 6 – final paragraph – should specify how many questionnaires were sent out. This will allow some estimate of response rate which I expect is quite low.
6. Page 7 – paragraph 1 – should specify if questionnaire asked respondents to identify their profession.

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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)
1. Page 12 – paragraph 2, line 6. The word “be” has been left out.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
1. Page 4, paragraph 2 says grand rounds attract a large audience but page 3 paragraph 3 says a large fraction of the potential grand rounds audience chooses not to attend. These seem contradictory.

What next?: Reject because scientifically unsound

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.