Reviewer's report

Title: Learning needs analysis to guide teaching evidence-based medicine: knowledge and beliefs amongst trainees from various specialities

Version: 1 Date: 30 November 2006
Reviewer: Paul Glasziou

Reviewer's report:

General
This is a survey of trainees attending a workshop about EBM. The questions are reasonable and interesting, the response rate of 100% is good, but the sample frame makes generalisation difficult. The most interesting finding is the gap between need and prior training: that is that interest in EBM was high but prior training was perceived as poor. However, as this is a self selected group wanting EBM training that is not a surprise in some ways.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. It would be very helpful to know what proportion of eligible trainees attended training? Was it 5% or 50%? This makes a big difference to interpreting these results.
2. I'd prefer the main results emphasised rather than the subgroups. The abstract is especially difficult in this respect as it talks about difference between groups without knowing the overall averages and findings (as per Table 1).

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
3. Most Tables should have only 2 rather than 3 significant figures eg Table 1 mean of 3.3 rather than 3.26 etc.
4. Some further subheading would help the reader eg Subgroups, ...
5. 3 statistical methods in Table 4 is overkill (CI + 2 p-values)
6. I thought the paper was number dense, and wondered if tables 3 & 4 could be presented as Figures instead?

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I chair a committee for a Leonardo grant held by the authors