Reviewer's report

Title: The Status of Undergraduate Training Programs in General Practice/Family Medicine influences Physician Career Choices Regarding Primary Care

Version: 1 Date: 23 September 2006

Reviewer: Martha S Grayson

Reviewer's report:

General
This is a very important topic, and relates to major health manpower issues in Greece. This has been studied extensively in the United States, and major curricular revisions have been made in an effort to encourage more students to choose a primary care specialty. From the preliminary results of this study, similar efforts should be made at Greek medical schools.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. The study reports on some interesting trends. However, the low number of respondents for a one year study, makes the validity of the findings a bit questionable. I would suggest that the study be repeated for several graduating classes and/or include students from other Greek medical schools in the study. More than 6 students in the pGP category are needed to draw some useful conclusions.
2. A more precise description of the survey is needed for the paper. (it also might be useful to include a copy of the survey for clarification). Some of the areas that need clarification are as follows:
   a) The reason for choosing the medical specialty- Were students instructed to pick just one reason, choose all that apply, rank order the reasons, or rate them on a Likert scale? Table 1 suggest the former, but this should be described in the methods. There is also some confusion because the authors state 4 reasons, but the table has 6 reasons. If two of these were obtained when students wrote in other options, they should probably be listed under "other" in the table with a description of these in the text.
   b)Describe questions listed in 2nd paragraph under survey instrument. Were the questions on potential problems during residency, selection, etc. open or closed-ended?
   c)Also need clarification of question format regarding GP/FM as specialty, source of info, etc. Were these set categories or open-ended? Were students allowed to choose more than one option? It is possible that a student could have heard about Gp from more than one source.
   d) how were sociodemographic data determined? For ex, how was urban vs semi-urban defined and categorized?
   e) was computer literacy a yes/no question and was it self-rated?
   f) what were the 4 choices for the definition of GP?

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. Results should be reported in order. Findings relating to Tables 3 and 4 (relating to source of information) were reported prior to findings for table 2
2. the sentence in results that refers to references 17-19 is not a finding of this study. This piece of information should be moved to the discussion section.
3. figure 1 is missing from the paper!

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
1. you might want to briefly describe the health care system in greece, especialy which fields are considered primary care. This would be useful for readers not familiar with the greek system. For instance, in the US, primary care is comprised of 3 specialities- family medicine, general internal medicine and general pediatrics.
2. the format of the tables is a bit difficult to follow with both vertical and horizontal findings. YOu might want to just report data in rows on the tables, and put the column information in the text. It would also be helpful to have " N(%)" on top of each column to clariy the numbers below. you do state that at the bottom of the table, but it would make it clearer.
3. consider changing the title. the study looks at many influences on the choice of GP as a career, not just undergraduate training programs.

**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 importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests