Reviewer's report

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

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Reviewer: Ian C McManus

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for asking me to look at this paper, with particular regard to the problem of the validity of the study given the low number of respondents potentially choosing GP.

Statistics in papers are very important, but I am not convinced that they should drive the way that the research goes. They are a tool for helping us to understand, and not an end in their own right.

It could be argued that this paper contains but one single result – that only six students out of 252 (2.4%) were considering GP (and indeed only one was definite about it). It is however a very striking result, that raises very many questions as to whether these students are fundamentally different from the others in their year, and so on. Clearly such questions are never going to be answerable from the present data because of a lack of statistical power. Nevertheless the authors could not have known that when the study started.

The single result found justifies the whole paper. It forces a future need for more research into attitudes to general practice, perhaps by better measuring instruments in which all students could feel that they can say something other than No. But I would have thought that is for the future.

My recommendation is that the paper is accepted subject to modification (and the present referee has made a number of pertinent points on description of scales and the like), and that the authors remove the inferential tests that are present – none would reach significance given any form of Bonferroni correction – and simply describe what they have found. The paper could be shorter as a result, but the power of that simple number six would come through much more. And presumably it is not without implication within Greece, and it will be of interest elsewhere.

Minor points.

– p.5. The comment that few medical students are choosing GP in "Europe and North America" is far too sweeping, not least because no other data are reported for Europe. In the UK, at least, the popularity goes up and down over time, but there are always substantial numbers interested in GP as a career.

– The comment in the last line about power and non-parametric statistics is wrong).