Reviewer's report

Title: A Systematic Review of Tests of Empathy in Medicine

Version: 3 Date: 15 April 2007

Reviewer: James Wofford

Reviewer's report:

General

GENERAL COMMENTS - With the revision that the authors have made, the manuscript is stronger, more readable to readers without expertise in this field, and more generalizable to other cultures. I commend the authors for their hard work. The medical educator community will benefit from it.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

ABSTRACT
--In order to be consistent with other manuscripts for this journal (and for other medical journals), the outline format of the methods section of the abstract should be converted to prose (see other abstracts in the journal).

--The first sentence of the results section. Replace records with citations, and measures with instruments. Better said "From 1144 citations, we identified 47 relevant papers describing 36 different instruments of empathy measurement."

--The language in the conclusion of the abstract and starts every sentence with "There is", or "there are". Stronger sentences avoid the phrase "There are/is".

Figure 1. Sorry that we made the authors perform the search twice, but it was necessary. However, it is not necessary to present the two results of the two different searches separately in Figure 1. The readers will not be interested how the two searches compared. Combining the two searches should require only combining the numbers from the two diagram branches to make one.

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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)

METHODS section
--The one paragraph on page 7 is too long and has two distinct concepts. Use one paragraph for reliability and one new paragraph for validity.

--p.8, line 4 - "any breakdown of results". This is most commonly stated as subgroup analysis.

--p. 8 , last sentence, - "in the event " does not make sense.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests