Reviewer’s report

Title: Competency-Based Evaluation Tools for Integrative Medicine Training in Family Medicine Residency: A Pilot Study

Version: 1 Date: 12 December 2006

Reviewer: Lawrence M. Reich

Reviewer’s report:

General

This article represents a useful contribution to the field of competency-based resident assessment, focusing on a set of clinical skills whose importance is emerging across a broad spectrum of clinical care. It is a pilot study, more valuable for the questions that it raises than for the questions that it answers.

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

1. In the Abstract—Methods section: the statement in the last line that descriptive statistics were used to examine the data is inappropriate. Descriptive statistics can only describe, not examine.

2. Page 5, 3rd paragraph. A reference or two would be useful after the statement “The details of the IFM curriculum have been described elsewhere…”

3. In regards to the two objectives stated in this paragraph, the title of the paper would imply that the 2nd objective is really the primary focus. I suggest either rephrasing this section or revising the title to be more reflective of the objectives.

4. Page 9, last sentence. Again, the use of “descriptive statistics” to address a goal is inappropriate. That is beyond their ability.

5. Page 10, last paragraph, line 4. The low sample size and therefore the fragility of the percentages should be acknowledged. Along these lines, the use of the phrase “clearly supports” seems to be overstating the conclusion. Perhaps “suggests” is more appropriate.

6. The last paragraph on this page presents conclusions and speculations as if they were results. For example, the concept that “residents need to be reminded to include explanations…” is one possibility, but it in itself is not found in the data, as they suggest.

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. In the Abstract, the use of the word “feel” in the last sentence of the abstract should be rephrased. I suggest “believe”.

2. Page 5, 1st line: Please add the word “and” between “body” and “spirit”.

3. Page 6, 3rd line from bottom: Insert the word “medicine” between “family” and “residency”. In the next line, I would change both semicolons to commas, and in the last line, delete the comma after (OSCEs).

4. Page 7, 1st line: I would change the semicolon to a comma. In the 4th line, I would add a comma after “Table 3”; in the next line, change “are” to “is”.

5. Delete the period following the section heading Direct Observation Evaluation Tool.

6. In the 2nd line from the bottom, change the 3rd word from “that” to “which”.

7. Page 8, 2nd line: Insert a comma after “evaluation”, and 2 lines later, after “back”.

8. Delete the period after the section heading Treatment Plan Evaluation Tool.

9. In the 4th line from the bottom, insert a comma after OSCE II.

10. Later in the text, reference to OSCE I 2005 and 2006 places the years in parentheses. Suggest consistency in usage.

11. Last line of 1st paragraph. Change “below 2.5” to “2.5 or below”, since several of the items in Table 4 have that value.

12. 2nd paragraph. The word “consistently” needs to be defined here (presumably, it means greater than 50%).

13. Page 10, last paragraph, line 3. Capitalize the t in table.

14. Page 11, 8th line. By the Table, this percentage should be 57%, not 71%.

15. Page 13, line 1. Insert “in” between experience” and “developing”.

16. Line 4, remove quotations around debriefing. (On following page as well.)

17. 3rd paragraph, line 5: Insert a period after faculty. Three lines later, would replace “Thus” with “Therefore”.

18. Page 15, 2nd line from bottom: Insert “there” before “is an apparent”.

19. Throughout text and tables, there is inconsistency in use of roman numerals versus Arabic numerals in reference to PGY level.

20. Table 1. Delete the period after the 6th bullet.

21. Table 2. Throughout the text, the ACGME Competencies are described as “General”—here they are “Core”. Try to be consistent.

22. Table 2: Insert an “s” at the end of the first word in #’s 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14, at the end of the 3rd word in #’s 13 and 14, and at the end of the 2nd word in #15.

23. Table 2. The “X” in #11 is wrong font.

24. Table 4. Footnote should read “2.5 or below”

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. The Results section of the Abstract contains text which is not Results, but really Discussion or Conclusions, and should be so identified.

2. Page 10, Results. I think it would be useful to see all of the items on the tool, not just the ones depicted in Tables 4 and 5.
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: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests