Reviewer's report

Title: Factors affecting medical students in formulating their specialty preferences in Jordan

Version: 1 Date: 14 December 2007

Reviewer: Doug Campos-Outcalt

Reviewer's report:

â€¢ This is accurately described as a cross sectional study.
â€¢ Since no final specialty choices have happened the correct term is specialty preference, which the authors use most of the time.

Discretionary revision

â€¢ Table 1â€¢ I am not sure what the p values are comparing or how useful they are. Are they comparing the distribution of responses between men and women?
â€¢ Figure 1 is a duplication of the information in a table and could be deleted.

Major compulsory revision:

â€¢ It appears that the questionnaire was administered once, to those students who were present at the time. I wonder about a potential bias. For instance if a 4th or 6th year student is doing an ambulatory, off site rotation, they might have missed the opportunity. Might those students who are interested in a primary care specialty be more likely to be doing such a rotation?
â€¢ I am not familiar with the medical education system in Jordan and a brief explanation would be useful: What is taught in each of the 6 years? Does a residency follow the 6 years? How many medical schools are in Jordan, and how do they differ? How much do students pay for tuition and what is their debt level? Do they have a service obligation. Any pertinent info that could put the study into context.
â€¢ What is meant by â€˜paymentâ€™ system?
â€¢ On page 8 references 18 and 19 are misinterpreted. Family medicine is still one of the most popular choices of US medical students, although the numbers choosing it have dropped considerably over the past 10 years.
â€¢ In the discussion on page 9, citation 25 is qualified by stating that it did not reflect actual residency choices. I believe that is the same for this study; it does not reflect actual residency choices either.
â€¢ On page 9, the advantages of primary care should be supported with references.

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

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

i declare i have no competing interests