Reviewer's report

Title: Identifying outcome-based indicators and content for a continuing medical education programme on rational prescribing using a modified Delphi process

Version: 1 Date: 28 January 2008

Reviewer: Anne Hesketh

Reviewer's report:

Junior doctor/hospital prescribing is of current interest in the UK so this paper focuses on a subject which is certainly topical. Although the study is community based the findings, I feel, should be of interest to many.

Discretionary Revisions
1) Re the 2nd stage of the Delphi did you feedback the 1st round scores at this stage or were the raters again scoring blind? Also reason for this choice.

Major Compulsory Revisions
1) I was initially happy with the Delphi process described which identified the 21 outcomes and drafted appropriate assessment indicators. My concern was the next stage when there seemed a big jump and a whole new section in the curriculum ie Adverse Reactions to Drugs. I appreciate the authors have put forward suggestions as to why this section did not emerge in the Delphi but it unsettled me about the authenticity of the Delphi results. I am not a pharmacist, but could ADRs not arise for reasons other than irrational prescribing? Should some relevant outcomes relating to this not have emerged from the Delphi? My personal feeling is that the paper would be better to simply focus on the first two phases of the project which were methodically conducted, the third phase being agreement between the team resulting in a big jump/addition from the earlier phases. If the paper stops after phase 2, the discussion could focus on the omissions perceived.

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, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests