Reviewer's report

Title: Professional approaches in clinical judgments: A qualitative interview study among senior and junior doctors.

Version: 1 Date: 5 December 2008

Reviewer: Manjeet Shehmar

Reviewer's report:

All revisions in my opinion are minor and essential.

Question

The question is not well defined. The word ‘professional’ incorporates many aspects and constructs. It would be useful if they stipulated which aspects of professionalism they are focussing on, e.g. attitudes, behaviours, etc.

Methods

In the study participants, there is a mixture of describing the senior doctors as those with vast ‘clinical education’ and ‘clinical experience’. These two are not the same and this study it is important to understand which of these it is.

Although you justify the selection of gender according to the allocation within each age group, the small numbers of females interviewed in this study may confound the results with a gender effect. It may be worth analysing the results according to gender. We certainly know that there is a gender effect amongst UK medical students.

Data

The data is well presented and analysed.

Discussion and conclusions

It would be useful to mention the potential effect of the interviewers on the responses. Were the interviewers people the study participants knew or were they independent to the participants work places?

The conclusion does not seem to fit with the discussion of the results as it currently reads. It seems to say that junior doctors are ‘experts’ at making decisions with little information. Is it actually that senior doctors are the experts as they find information quicker through knowing what they are looking for? (quotation in focussing on available information).

General

The authors do acknowledge previous literature.
The abstract does convey the paper.

There are mistakes in the grammar which makes reading some sentences very difficult. For example, the first two sentences in the results section.

The use of the word ‘younger’ for junior doctors may be offensive to some readers. Some of our postgraduate entrant students and junior doctors in the UK are of similar ages to experienced clinicians. It would be useful to standardise your descriptions to ‘senior’ and ‘junior’ unless you mention the age ranges of your participants.

Advise:

Accept after minor essential revisions.

Needs some language corrections before publishing.

Competing interests

None declared

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Declaration of competing interests:**

Competing interests

None declared