Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 8 December 2008

Reviewer: Sharon Buckley

Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

This is an interesting study that compares the clinical approaches of junior and senior doctors and suggests that differences in such approaches may have implications for clinical education. As such, it is a potentially useful contribution to knowledge in this field. However,

1. This study requires an abstract which outlines its aims, methods, results and conclusions in a way that highlights the contribution of the study to our understanding of clinical education pedagogy.

2. The aims of this study are not clearly stated, nor are the reasons why this study is important clearly defined. Further attention to these areas is required. In particular, clarification of the possible implications of different professional approaches for clinical education would assist the authors in making the case for the importance of this study and its findings.

3. Although this is a qualitative study, clarification of how the authors decided that a given approach was typical of a particular group of doctors is required. Was one example in the group sufficient, or was more required? Or was an overall judgement made from study of all relevant responses?

4. A clear summary of the differences in clinical approach between junior and senior doctors is required, perhaps by using a table to summarise the findings.

- Minor Essential Revisions

1. Study participants. ‘The proportion of female and male participants was selected to represent the allocation within each age group population’. This needs to be restated to make it clear which group of doctors is being used as the comparator. Is it doctors within the one hospital, within the region or nationally?

2. In a paper devoted to the clinical approaches of doctors, it is perhaps more appropriate that references to the definition of clinical experience (reference 1) includes medical as well as nursing articles.

- Discretionary Revisions

1. The authors state that further research is required to elucidate the effects of
the different professional approaches used by doctors on clinical education. It would be useful if the authors could give some examples of the types of study they envisage.

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

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**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.