Reviewer’s report

Title: The influence of regional branch campuses on medical students' choice of specialty and practice location: a historical cohort study

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Reviewer: Amanda Barnard

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This is an interesting and original paper, that adds important information to the growing international literature on effect of regional training locality on career choice and specific career location choice. Most studies have focused on clinical training locations, but this looks at location of basic medical science training.

A discretionary revision, and possibly helpful to international readers, would be a brief description in the background of the campus towns -size, rurality, number of students undertaking initial medical studies.

The question is well defined and the methods (a retrospective record analysis with multivariate logistic regression) was appropriate and well described. The cohort is well described.

The data is sound, although it is noted that because of the circumscribed nature of the hypothesis – of practice location close to regional campus- only just over half the cohort (those practicing in Indiana) was analyzed. One aspect that may be worthy of further investigation, although outside the clearly stated aim of this paper, would be analysis of practice locations (rural vs. urban) of the remainder of the cohort who were practicing outside Indiana.

A minor revision in table 1 – it would be helpful to have total number of students at regional vs. main campus.

The discussion is a particularly strong aspect of this paper. The results raise a number of questions for further research which the authors define well.

The limitations of the work are clearly stated, as is acknowledgment of previous work.

The title and abstract convey what has been found. The title could perhaps reflect the fact that it is basic medical training, as this is really the key, and new, point of this research (discretionary revision)

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