Reviewer's report

Title: Emotional intelligence and perceived stress in healthcare students: a multi-institutional, multi-professional survey

Version: 1 Date: 7 July 2009

Reviewer: Chris Bundy

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions
none

Minor Essential revisions
Table 2 needs to be labelled better and explained more thoroughly. For example, what does ‘full sample’ and ‘subset’ refer to? This may be better described as time 1 and time 2 possibly. Means and standard deviations are not given despite this being asserted in the results section on page 9.

The authors need to check the total number completing at time 1 and time 2 and this should tally with the numbers entered in the reliability analysis. If not an explanation could be given.

It is not clear why year one students were used, can the authors justify this as stress should increase as the students gain more clinical responsibility.

Post-graduate students will have learned skills of adaptation and again the authors need to justify including undergraduate and post-graduate students in their sample.

The response rate is a problematic I calculate it to be 76% at time 1 and 39% at time 2. This drop-out rate potentially biases the sample completing the study and should be discussed in the limitations of the study.

The demographic data in table 1 are slightly out. ‘Ethnicity’ sums to 89.3% not 100% there is one missing value. They have quoted the wrong value for Asian or British Asian mental health students – the value should read 5.9% not 1%. With these corrections the ‘ethnicity’ values would add up to 100%. Similarly gender percentages for dental students are 35.3% not 35.8% for male and 64.7% not 64.2% for females.

Discretionary revisions
The background identifies the main studies in the area and what is not know but the aims could be made a little more explicit including the hypotheses being tested.

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

**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.