Reviewer's report

Title: The practice of defensive medicine among hospital doctors in the United Kingdom

Version: 1 Date: 5 July 2013

Reviewer: Robert M Rodriguez

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Overall, I believe this manuscript addresses an important topic and would be an important addition to the medical literature. With a minor revision, I believe it should be accepted for publication.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   Yes

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   Methods are well described. Could be improved somewhat by A. Use of a more validated instrument: There is one produced by the US Congress Office of Technology Assessment B. Not sure why some of the variables were chosen for analysis. There is little reason to believe that gender affects defensive medicine, as well as age.
   C. The mixed method (written survey for some then oral survey) is a bit of a problem. The authors should describe in more detail how often and how this was accomplished. Were there any controls for social desirability bias when performing face to face surveys?
   D. Cloaking the questions with other topics and having repeat questions phrased in a different manner would add to the validity of the findings.

3. Are the data sound?
   Yes

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   Could use some more in depth discussion

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   Mostly. Hawthorne Effect and social desirability should be discussed.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   Yes
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Yes

9. Is the writing acceptable?
Fair number of errors in spelling and grammar