Reviewer's report

Title: The development of a brief and objective evaluation method for medical ethics education: A test battery of measures for moral sensitivity and reasoning

Version: 1 Date: 19 December 2003

Reviewer: Donnie Jordan Self

Reviewer's report:

General
1. The questions posed by the authors are clear and well defined.
2. The methods are well described although one might take issue with the use of only two vignettes from the DIT. It is not clear how that might affect the validity and reliability of the DIT scores.
3. Sufficient details are given for others to replicate the work.
4. The data seem sound and well controlled.
5. The discussion and conclusion are balanced and supported by the data although the description and use of DP values was not at all clear and needs further explanation and elaboration.
6. The abstracts accurately describes what was done and reports was found found. However, the title is a little misleading since the project does not really evaluate medical ethics education exactly or its various methodologies. Rather, simply evaluates the moral development and ethical sensitivity of the students regardless of how they got it. It is not clear what influence medical education had on it. It may have come from parents, religious leaders, etc. Also the authors accurately point out the problem of this being cross-sectional research and not a longitudinal study as well as the need for additional research which I hope they will do.
7. The writing is quite acceptable although minor editing would be helpful especially with the use of the word "whom."
8. These are all discretionary comments which I hope will be helpful and encouraging to the authors. Clearly, this project reflects an enormous amount of work for which the authors are to be commended. Having done research in this field myself, I am well aware of the amount of effort required to accomplish a study such as this. The authors recognize the limitations of this study and the need for and importance of more research which hopefully will encourage them to undertake additional projects such as this one.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
none