Reviewer's report

Title: Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Healthcare Ethics and Law among Doctors and Nurses in Barbados

Version: 1 Date: 19 April 2006

Reviewer: Merrilyn Walton

Reviewer's report:

General

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

The introduction outlining the position in relation to 'ethical' preparedness for practice could be improved with a summary of the literature of similar studies. See Green et al Lying to each other: When internal residents use deception with their colleagues Archives of Internal Medicine 2000;160:2317-23. Kapp M Legal anxieties and medical mistakes Journal of Internal Medicine 1997;12: 787-88

Much work is being done in undergraduate and post graduate medical ethics curricula particularly around professionalism and medical ethics and health law. There is no recognition of this in the article.

The methodology used a structured survey and had an excellent response rate. (373 out of 400) But the tables do not reflect the numbers. For example Table 1 only accounts for 159 respondents not 373. Where did the 214 respondents go to??? ( page 3) Similar concerns relate to the other tables.

The method does not say how the questionnaire was developed- particularly Table 5.

The Tables only use percentages-numbers should be included and a total column as well.

Results section

Need to define 'junior physician'

The results section needs a lot more than description of the Table. For example on page 6 The results section just says what Table 5 is.( Same for Table 6) There needs to be a synthesis of the results including comparative data highlighted.

Discussion

There is no discussion of Table 5 or the implication of the results.

On page 9 there is a discussion of 'autonomy' but no context is provided for such a discussion. If the discussion comes from Table 5 results than this needs to be stated and also the pathway taken by the authors to arrive at this position.

Conclusion

This needs to be more specific rather than general statements- If workplace learning is pivotal as this study suggests then the data supportingt this needs to be identified and highlighted. Conclusions and recommendations then come from this.
Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Some of the terms need describing - Ethics Committee role and functions

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests