Reviewer's report

Title: Physicians' propensity to collaborate and their attitude towards EBM: A cross-sectional study

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Reviewer: Laurent Boyer

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Review: PHYSICIANS’ PROPENSITY TO COLLABORATE AND THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS EBM: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY (L Boyer)

This article is well written and of interest. The design of the study is well done. The introduction is concise and clearly laid out to the importance of the current study. The aim of the study is to assess whether physicians' self-reported attitude towards EBM is related to the formation of inter-physician collaborative network ties. The use of SNA is appropriate.

However, I have several comments on this manuscript.

1/ Major Compulsory Revisions

- Although the method and result sections are well written, these sections should be shortened, especially the section on survey instrument (1 page) / variables (2 pages) and statistical analysis (1 page). An effort of synthesis would be appreciated. I also suggest grouping the survey instrument and variables sections.

In the same way, the result section is frequently redundant between the text and the tables.

I am not sure that the following sentences are results:

“In the first column of the table estimates are produced for the dependent variable represented by the valued professional network consisting of the complex web of collaborative ties among physicians. In the second column of the table the results of the MR-QAP in which the dependent variable was the binarized professional network are reported. A binary version of the professional network matrix was used in order to learn whether homophily in terms of physicians’ attitude towards EBM also has an effect on the existence of an inter-physician relation. Table 3 reports standardized coefficients for the parameter estimates, which allows us to answer the question which of the independent variables have a greater effect on the dependent variable.”

- Response rate for the social network analysis is potentially an important bias in this study. If the global response rate is high, this is not the case for the oncology clinical directorates. Can the authors discuss this point (may be to add in the limitation section).

- The seniority in the hospital is also an important characteristic that should be
included in the analysis.
- The authors should indicate in the statistical analysis the cut-off for the significance (p < 0.10 or p<0.05). It looks strange for me to choose p=0.10.
- This sentence is not clear: as shown in Table 3, results were significant when the binarized network, rather than the valued professional network, was considered as dependent variable.” The results are relatively concordant?
- It is not clear for me why “The negative sign of the parameters coupled with these covariates should be interpreted as a tendency toward homophily on the specific characteristic represented by the covariate. First, these results indicate that physicians who are similar with respect to the number of years since their degree are more likely to cooperate (# = -0.0318; p<0.01). Specifically, those who publish in a similar manner, defined in terms of number of papers published in peer-reviewed journals, are more likely to exchange information and advice (# = -0.0167; p<0.05).”

Concerning age since graduation, I would say that professional network is less important when years since graduation are higher. Can we conclude from this result that physicians who are similar with respect to the number of years since their degree are more likely to cooperate? I am not sure. Complementary analysis would be necessary to confirm the hypothesis of the authors.
In the same way, concerning the number of publication, I would say that professional network is less important when the number of publications is higher. Complementary analysis would be necessary to confirm the hypothesis of the authors.
Same comment for the managerial role.
Considering this last comment, several part of the discussion/hypothesis on these results should be rewritten.

2/ Minor Essential Revisions
- The study was conducted from February to November (10 months). Can the authors justify the length of the study?
- I don’t understand why clinical directorates which concerned Neuroscience, Oncology and maternal health included all the physicians. These 3 directorates don’t concern all specialities.

**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.