Reviewer's report

Title: For money or service? A cross-sectional survey of preference for financial versus non-financial rural practice characteristics among Ghanaian medical students.

Version: 2 Date: 21 July 2011

Reviewer: Farrah Mateen

Reviewer's report:

This is an original article on fourth-year medical students' preferences on various practice related parameters related to rural practice in Ghana. I found the project well-designed and well-written. The results will be most interest to Ghana and countries in the region but could be argued to have implications for rural recruitment in other low-income settings. In general, I agree with the authors' interpretation of the results and found the discussion to be thorough. The response rate is excellent.

I have only minor comments:

Background: para 2, citations 5-7 seem to apply to developing country-derived literature although this is not stated outright in the paragraph.

Methods: p. 8, last para, Under "sample," part of this could come under the discussion (motivation to choose these participants).

p. 12 sentence beginning with "Over half. . . " delete either "were" or "would"

p. 13 could explain Ewe is an ethnicity (as per table) which may not be apparent to all readers

p. 13 UDS student sample is small and I'm unclear how valuable it is know what the UDS students thought (what are the implications of that student group having different opinions in general)?

p. 13 The fact that students seeking emigration value salary is seemingly an important finding of the questionnaire. Do you have any background on what the salary currently is for Ghanian physicians (rural/urban)?

p. 14 I didn't understand what management style referred to exactly and the table legend didn't explain this well.

I wonder how important the "young" or "old" distinctions are given that the age range is narrow and "old" is 25 years old!

The finding that non-financial incentives and better infrastructure may be valuable to recruitment (and one may argue retention) is important to health ministries and policymakers. Clinically, this has been my experience when
working abroad.

I enjoyed the article and recommend its publication in this journal.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.