Reviewer's report

**Title:** Swiss residents’ speciality choices - impact of gender, personality traits, career motivation and life goals

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 9 October 2006

**Reviewer:** Olaf Gjerløw Aasland

**Reviewer's report:**

The article has improved considerbly

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**Major Compulsory Revisions**

None

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**Minor Essential Revisions**

None

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**Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)**

Three:

1) The part of the Methods chapter starting on page 5 with "Of the 552 physicians participating at the thirds assessment . . ." and to the next subtitle (Speciality training and residencies in Switzerland) should in my opinion be moved to the introductory part of the Results section.

2) It should be considered whether the comparison with all Swiss working specialists, mentioned on page 8 and 9, should be part of the Discussion and not part of the Results section.

3) Two instruments measuring personality traits (RSE and GE-PAQ) are used, and the conclusion is (p.10): ". . .there are no direct significant influences of personality traits on the speciality choice." However, in the Discussion, much emphasis is placed on personality, career motivation and life goals, and a new "taxonomy" of careers, the RIASEC, is introduced, which, at least at the surface level, looks very much like a trait based personality inventory. This principle is used in a rather extensive discussion on motives for speciality choice. Does this mean that the authors regret that they did not include an instrument based on the RIASEC model in the study, or is it a way of taking trait variables in "through the back door"? In other words: is there a "surgical personality" (or a "psychiatric personality" or not? And if so, should this have an impact on how we choose our medical students?

**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:**

I declare that I have no competing interests