Author's response to reviews

Title: Part-time and full-time medical specialists, are there differences in allocation of time?

Authors:

Judith D. de Jong (j.dejong@nivel.nl)
Phil Heiligers (p.heiligers@nivel.nl)
Peter P. Groenewegen (p.groenewegen@nivel.nl)
Lammert Hingstman (l.hingstman@nivel.nl)

Version: 3 Date: 23 January 2006

Author’s response to reviews: see over
We have read the comments of the reviewers and revised the manuscript in response to their comments. We will briefly respond to the comments and state how we revised the manuscript.

Minor essential revisions.
1. **On p.9 it was unclear how hours worked per FTE was measured.** We added a sentence: “Our last dependent variable was the total number of hours worked per FTE. This variable was computed based on self-reports from respondents on the number of hours and what FTE they worked.”
2. **On p.10 a finding was incorrectly characterized as significant.** This is corrected.
3. **The manuscript was inconsistent regarding paragraph indentation and the use of present vs past tense.** We went through the manuscript and changed it whenever necessary.

Discretionary revisions.
1. **In the efforts to streamline the manuscript, an important finding might have been eliminated.** Doesn’t the similarity between part-timers and full-timers indicate that full-timers are not having to devote proportionately more time to some tasks? This is related to bullet point 12 in the previous reaction where the reviewer points at benefits for full-timers. We conclude in our article that part-timers do their share of the job, based on the findings presented in the article. We can not conclude that there is actual benefit in working with part-timers, not in the current and not in the previous manuscript. In this article we compared full-time working specialists to part-time working specialists and we can not conclude that part-time medical specialist take over some of the tasks of full-time medical specialists. In the current manuscript the main findings are presented.
2. **The 4th question might work better when moved to the first position.** We think that the question would work both in the first and the fourth position and decided not to change its position.

Major essential revisions.
1. **State that corrected for age and gender and say how.** We added a sentence to the methods section: “We controlled for age and gender in all analyses. Both variables were centred, to give the model interpretable meaning [23].”
2. **Eliminate most of the tables.** This would probably mean combining tables. As this is an internet journal we prefer more tables with less information, because that makes it easier to read on the internet, than less tables with more information. The latter would be more appropriate in a paper journal.
3. **Reduce the number of words, the introduction remains far too long, the writing is clunky, and the findings are more suitable for a brief report.** We reduced the number of words in our previous revision and are convinced that all the information given in the introduction is necessary for understanding this study and its context. With the article we show that part-time medical specialists do their share of the job. This is an important finding because many medical specialists believe that part-time working medical specialists contribute less. We did not find evidence that supports their conviction, we proved the opposite. Given the policy importance of these results, we feel that they should be published in full and not as a brief report.