Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 20 October 2005

Reviewer: Shelley MacDermid

Reviewer's report:

General
The findings in the revised paper are more modest than those in the original. The basic finding is now that part-time workers allocate their time in very similar ways to full-time workers.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

On p. 9 the manuscript is still not clear about how 'hours worked per FTE' was measured. Were respondents asked how many hours AND what fte they worked?

On p. 10, a p=.06 finding is incorrectly characterized as significant. The first paragraph in this section reports no significant differences but the second paragraph makes it sound as though there are differences -- both cannot be correct.

The manuscript is inconsistent regarding paragraph indentation and the use of present vs. past tense.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

In the efforts to streamline the manuscript, I wonder if one interesting finding was eliminated. It relates to bullet point 12 in the authors' response to the reviewers. With data on partnerships and hospitals in the analyses, 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? The manuscript already reports that part-timers seem to be 'pulling their weight' regarding each of the areas of task performance, countering one of the common 'fears' regarding implementation of customized work arrangements.

I wonder whether the 4th research question would work better if it were moved into the first position. This way, the issue of hours per fte can be dispensed with and the entire remainder of the manuscript can deal with proportion of time allocated.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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.