Author’s response to reviews

Title: Medical migration in Europe: an overview of the current situation.

Authors:

Miguel A Garcia Perez (mangel@cesm.org)
Carlos Amaya Pombo (secrgene@cesm.org)
Angel Otero (angel.oteru@uam.es)

Version: 2 Date: 6 September 2007

Author’s response to reviews: see over
Dear Sir,

We have received with big interest the reviewers’ reports on our manuscript. We wish to thank your attention and that of the reviewers, specially that from Amy Hagopian, who has made many and rich suggestions to ameliorate the manuscript style and orthography; we have considered every one and accepted most of them. It’s also worth to stand out her effort for understanding the European focus of our work.

Joined to this letter, we send a new version of our manuscript, in which we have included most of the modifications suggested by the reviewers. We think they strengthen the sense of the text, and clear some ideas that could be of difficult understanding in the original version.

In the post-script, we detail the changes included in the manuscript, in response to the reviewers’ comments. More over, we have replaced the 24th reference, including a recent study from the OECD.

We hope this changes answer the concerns about our manuscript. We would like to thank the work made by reviewers and editorial committee.

We look forward your answer.

Sincerely

Ángel Otero.

• IN RESPONSE TO AMY HAGOPIAN
  1. We think the sources of our data are clear in the new redaction, including our authorship of the survey sent to professional organisations. We think the survey questions are clearly listed in the original version, and we maintain this aspect. Finally, we mention the response rate.
  2. The question about the country origin of a doctor is clarified by the new writing of the first paragraph in the Methods section. Now, we use the term foreign for nationality of origin, and foreign-trained for country of graduation. The “born” criterion is not used, at least explicitly, for any of the data sources we have consulted.
  3. We have introduced population ratios in table 1, mentioned data sources in tables 2 and 3, and clarified figure 1 with the explanation of coloured sectors. We think they are now clearer and easier to understand.
  4. We have insisted in the growth of migration flows in the European region, the different profiles of physicians’ migration and the different level in which each country is entangled. We think specific recommendations for countries are out of our reach, because our target was to clear the actual situation, only lightly suspected before the scarcity of data.

• IN RESPONSE TO GEORGE FRYER:
1. The different European countries have different ways of registering its professionals, and it’s not easy to uniform the information. But this has been the excuse for the inexistence of published data on physicians’ migration in Europe. Our target has been to publish the available data, and to analyse it taking into account the limitations of them.

2. We think that a period of three years between the main data (the extremes are Italy, 2004 and Ireland, 2007) it’s not enough to question the validity of our analysis, taking into account that the existing analysis include bigger temporal gaps and older data than the ours, and our intention of showing the most recent data in each case. For example, the emigration factor, that have been used in main articles in the subject (references 21 y 24), has the same time-related limitations, because data on physician workforce is taken from WHO, and there is a time gap between data countries too. They are inexact tools, but they show the big trends existing in physician migration in Europe.

- **IN RESPONSE TO ADAMSON MUULA:**
  1. We change the title for “Physicians’ migration in Europe...”. We think his recommendation is very right.
  2. We have modified slightly the Methods section, clarifying the data obtained from Pubmed and those obtained from the survey, and stating that we use, for each country, the more recent data.
  3. The pretension to analyse the implications of migration clearly exceeds our target, so we suppress its mention in the text.
  4. We don’t understand the commentary about tables referred as figures. There is a table 1 and a figure 1, that are complementary; and there is a table 2, that is cited as table in the text. We have changed slightly tables 1 and 3 to try a better understanding by the potential readers, following the reviewer recommendation.
  5. The PubMed search gave us two articles with data from some other destination countries for which no other data were available: Belgium, Switzerland and Denmark. We used these data, joined with data from Canada and US, for analysing the emigration factor. As stated upwards, we used the more recent data for each country with more than one data source.