Author's response to reviews

Title: Doctor and practice characteristics associated with differences in patient evaluations of general practice

Authors:

Hanne N Heje (hh@alm.au.dk)
Peter Vedsted (p.vedsted@alm.au.dk)
Ineta Sokolowski (ineta.s@alm.au.dk)
Frede Olesen (fo@alm.au.dk)

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

We hereby submit the third revised edition of our manuscript. We have now structured the abstract according to the journal's guidelines and sought to meet with the referees' comments (our replies to the referees are listed below).

We hope that the manuscript is satisfactory and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

on behalf of the authors

Hanne Heje

Replies to the comments of referee 1:

1. The manuscript has now three times undergone language editing by one of our most respected teachers of English language, Prof. Morten Pilegaard from the Aarhus School of Business. Prof. Morten Pilegaard has a long-standing experience in editing medical papers according to British English language. It must now be for the editor to decide whether our paper needs further English editing.

2. We have rearranged the paragraphs "Strengths" and "Weaknesses", but have - despite the comment by the referee - kept the subsections as before. As the BMC Health Services Research does not offer any specific framework for the Discussion section in the Instruction for Authors, we chose to arrange the Discussion section according to a paper by R. Smith (5853) whose recommendations the BMC refers to in other matters (http://www.biomedcentral.com/bmchealthservres/ifora/). If the editor wishes for another arrangement, please let us know.

3. The title of the implications section has been changed to "Policy and practice implications". The content has undergone slight (hopefully) clarifying changes.

4. We are not sure that the suggested change will result in a correct wording of the legend. We chose to consider the changes proposed by the third referee.

5. We chose to keep the term "single handed" for labelling practices with only one GP. A quick search for both terms in earlier publications from BMC Health Services Research produced several "hits" on both this term and the term "solo practice".

Replies to the comments of referee 3:

1. We inserted a short specification of the dependent and independent variables just before the last paragraph of the Analyses subsection of the Methods section as suggested by the referee.

2. We changed the labels of the models explained in the Analyses subsection of the Methods section as suggested by the referee. The same labels are now being used throughout the manuscript and the tables.

3. We tested the goodness of fit of the models that we used. This procedure is now described in a "Modelling data"-subsection of the "Material and methods"-section. The p-values from the tests for
goodness of fit are shown in tables 3-7.

4. We fully agree with the referee: it is annoying and time consuming to have to cross-read text and tables. In this case, however, we found that the least inappropriate. In order to present the association between evaluation and patient gender, we would have to insert the R and CI regarding five dimensions, which may be ok. But regarding some of the other GP- and practice characteristics, we would have to insert up to 20 sets of PR and CI. In our opinion, that would indeed compromise the readability of the results-section as well as the abstract. If the does not agree with us, we will, of course, comply with the referee's request.

5. The referee correctly states that one category may be omitted from Tables 1 and 2 without loss of information. This may in fact also be the case with the other variables. This may save a bit of space, but may reduce the immediate readability of the tables. This was why we chose to keep all the categories.

6. We have changed the title of the table legend as suggested by the referee and explained their abbreviations in the tables in footnotes accordingly.

Footnotes:
The footnotes have been changed in order to follow the Uniform Requirements and all footnotes have been replicated in all tables as rightly suggested by the referee.