Reviewer's report

Title: Career-Success Scale - a new instrument to assess young physicians' academic career steps

Version: 1 Date: 17 March 2008

Reviewer: Sharon E Straus

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting article and it's great to see some work done in career choice. There are a few things that the authors may want to consider to further strengthen their manuscript:

1. what is the advantage of this scale when compared with looking at numbers of research grants and publications which is the traditional format for looking at productivity/success of researchers? Indeed most universities use these as assessment criteria for promotions etc.
2. what about those people who aren't researchers? i.e. medical educators. can this scale be used to assess their success as well?
3. suggest the authors change the line in the abstract and intro stating that those in academic medicine have higher values to: these people scored higher on the scale
4. their hypothesis in the rationale/intro that male physicians are more advanced in their career than female physicians – does this mean at the same seniority level?
5. third hypothesis in rationale/intro – 'career success is significantly associated WITH'
6. who was involved with the expert meeting that was held to develop the scale? i.e. who are the mentors and mentees? Are they all in academic medicine or were physicians from private practice also included? Were women and men proportionally represented?
7. need more details on how the items were generated for the CSS i.e.: was this just based on the expert panel members? Was this informed by a literature review of factors influencing career success?
8. this questionnaire seems to be focused on those pursuing a career in research – as opposed to education or administrative positions in academia
9. not clear how this survey was administered i.e.: were the respondents asked to consider publications ever or over the last year? Same thing with grants etc
10. mentioned that women didn’t score as well as men – was mat leave taken into account or other reasons for gaps in training?
11. mentorship/ supervision of juniors not included in this survey; access to a mentor also not included
12. not sure how this would be used to provide support for the trainees? Could they provide an example – they mention this as a rationale for development of the scale. How will this help them support someone who wants to do private practice??
13. did they do lit searches to determine if participants did have publications? Or did they rely on self-report only?

I look forward to seeing further publications on how this group has used (and evaluated) this tool to support physicians in their career development.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

i declare that i have no competing interests