Author's response to reviews

Title: Is networking different with doctors working part-time? Differences in social networks of part-time and full-time doctors

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Dear editors,

In the revised manuscript all comments of the reviewers are seriously worked out. The main effort was to rewrite parts of the theoretical background. But all the steps taken in the revision are explained in the comments below.

1. Explanation of part-time working in the context of the theoretical background.

A main point in the comments of all referees was the definition and position of part-time workers in the context of this study (point 3, referee Paice; point 3, referee Kilmartin; point 2 and 4, referee West). In the revision of the theoretical background we focussed on a broader introduction in which we explain why the topic of informal work related networks is important for the position of part-time working medical specialists. Secondly, the position of part-time working doctors within the self-employed partnerships was explained, and especially the way part-time working is defined within these partnerships.

Furthermore, in the revision of the theoretical background we focussed on a more consequent use of concepts and occasionally we used a more descriptive explanation.

Finally, we revised the second sentence in the paragraph (theoretical background) were we had left some confusing parts of a former formulation (point 2, referee Paice).

2. Methods

- On page 6 and 7 we added information about the process of data collection as was asked for by referee Kilmartin (point 2);
- The answer to point 3 of referee West can be found on page 8 under ‘Aggregated network measures’. We used full networks and the ego networks in analyses. But the main question of this study should be answered by analysing
ego networks, because we want to know more about differences between part-time and full-time working individuals and their networks.

- In the paragraph about team characteristics we added all 8 activities for measuring the degree of formalization, which was correctly noted by referee West (point 5).

3. Some concepts should be clarified.

- The concept ‘trustful’ feedback (page 4; referee Kilmartin point 5) was changed into: confidential feedback, which is more appropriate. And the short formulation of ‘social capital arguments’ and a ‘few other conditions’ was placed in the context of the theoretical background (in the paragraph ‘further team and individual influences’; referee Kilmartin, point 5);

- The concept of efficient reachability is well-known in Network theory (point 1 of referee West). It is based on (sociological) rational choice ideas, that individuals choose their contacts in a way that they will get optimal information. If we seek our contacts among powerful or coordinating colleagues who are in the position that they are contacted by many others, than we receive more information compared to the information an isolated colleague could provide us with.

4. Finally, we added a sentence about the ethical approval of the study by the National Associations of physicians, who fully supported this study. This sentence was added in the first paragraph of the Methods section under Data and Selection of teams.

We hope that the revision has clarified difficulties and shortcomings.