Reviewer’s report

Title: The accuracy of General Practitioner workforce projections

Version: 1 Date: 13 March 2013

Reviewer: Judy Bloom

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions - The paper challenges the established theory that more data equals better projections. This is potentially important to planners who often lack huge amounts of historical data and could therefore be a good, publishable contribution. However, the method presented here does not clearly enough describe how historical data was or was not used (eg. inflow data is historical data) and how policy choices were removed as an influence if the original projections influenced inflow numbers. More significant testing of the shorter base period producing more accuracy is required in order to ensure the method is not just identifying the relationship between a historical projection and the resulting intended change to level of enrollments. Additionally we generally weight the most recent time frame as the most accurate regardless. It must be clearer the outcome being presented in this paper is something different.

Minor Essential Revisions - 1) Conclusions section in the Abstract should more specifically answer the main question of whether the original projections were accurate or not. Current draft seems to have emphasized the unexpected result/relationship of projection horizon and base period to the exclusion of the original question. 2) Methods section, para 1, sentence 6 "...projections made in the would..." words are missing or edit is needed 3) Results section, para 1, sentence 1 - what is the context for demand ie what is the risk of the large range for error? This could be addressed in resolving comment #1 related to answering the main question in the conclusion section more directly. 4) Discussion section, para 8 - I think this is the beginning of a new section for Limitations but the title is missing. 5) Discussion para 8/Limitations para 1, sentences 6 and 7, there seems to be words missing. 6) Limitations para 4, last sentence is a repeat sentence 7) Conclusions section, as previously mentioned the first goal of the research - how accurate were the initial set of projections relative to actuals - is not represented with emphasis in the conclusion.

Discretionary Revisions - 1) Background, para 2, sentence 5 - I think it is unusual not to reference ageing workforce in this list of dynamics although you may have intended that with the reference to reduction of working hours 2) Discussion section, para 4, sentence 3 - very interesting observation, potentially quite valuable - I will be applying right away in my work. 3) Discussions section, para 5, last sentence, seems abrupt - an example of a different type of projection might be useful 4) Discussion section, paras 6 and 7 - I found these paragraphs to introduce ideas and topics that seemed not part of the research and therefore detracting from the overall strengths of the paper.
**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare I have no competing interests.