Reviewer’s report

Title: An Evaluation of the Global Network of Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Programs: a Resource for Improving Public Health Capacity and Increasing the Number of Public Health Professionals Worldwide

Version: 1 Date: 19 June 2013

Reviewer: Marina M.K Khoury

Reviewer’s report:

Thanks for asking me to review this paper.

I agree with the authors: “FETPs are a resource for improving Public Health capacity and increasing the number of Public Health Professionals Worldwide”. This is a very important paper because health professionals need to know the work of FETPs and the paper will allow it.

However, I think the paper should be strengthened in some points.

Major compulsory revisions:

1. Background should contain citations in the first paragraph.

2. The aim of the paper should be better specified. The objectives in the abstract should be consistent with those appeared in the full text. Besides, in the last sentence of methods, seems to be another aim difference to the presented in the background.

3. Figure 1 presents the activities of the residents between 2009 and 2012 but methods are not clearly describing the methodology in obtaining this information during the period.

4. Lack data analysis methods description. At least, would be adequate to describe that the analysis was qualitative to identify categories (It is a study in all the population of FETPs in the network. The manuscript does not need statistics.)

5. It is recommended that methods include the review of abstracts submitted to the global meeting since those results are presented in the paper.
6. Some phrases in discussion are not sufficiently supported for results. For example: Quality improvement describes TEPHINET activity of accreditation and there are not accreditation data in results.

7. Abstract: The objectives and conclusions in the abstract should be consistent with those appear in the full text. The abstract does not report the number of respondents FETPs worldwide (n=57).

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Figure 1: Title refers to 12 subjects but in Y axis there are 13 (with “others”).
2. Figure 2: Lack title “number of activities” in Y axis.
3. Table 2: The phrase “includes 3,302 graduates from EIS” should not be duplicated.
4. Results should not have citations.

Discretionary Revisions
1. TEPHINET description could be part of methods as the description of the study site, including TEPHINET conference purpose (3° paragraph under “some recent FETP activities and accomplishments”), accreditation program and Continuous Quality Improvement manual.

2. The text of the Results section should be crafted to follow a sequence that allows answering each objective in the same order. The results text should include the number of observations and not just the percentages.

“Minor issues not for publication”: For a better understanding of the text, the order of the results should be presented differently. I suggest the following order:
   a) FETPs Programs: number of programs and features (hosted institution, admission criteria, program curricula, FETPs that accept trainees from other countries, master degree, quality certificated, etc)
   b) Trainees: number, professions, distribution, etc.
   c) FETP activities.
   d) Graduates: number, reported working place,
   e) Collaborating organizations and agencies.

Level of interest:
An article of importance in its field.

Quality of written English:
Acceptable.

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

Declaration of competing interests:
I coordinated Argentinean FETP till 2005. Last year, I received fees due to TEPHINET Global Meeting abstracts review. The abstract review activity was related to a planned multi-site evaluation of FETPs.

Assessment of the manuscript:
Accept after minor essential revisions