Reviewer’s report

Title: Widening disparity in the geographic distribution of pediatricians in Japan

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Reviewer: Nomura Kyoko

Reviewer’s report:

This study investigated recent changes in the geographic distribution of pediatricians and the factors underlying this change using national data. I admire the authors for exploiting principal component to detect factors which may explain for the change.

The text is well written and analyses and its presentation is very clear.

Here are some minor points which the authors need to pay attention to:

The author investigated a change in the geographic distribution of pediatricians during relatively short period of time from 2002 to 2007. Therefore, the application of the results of this study may be limited. Authors should mention this in discussion.

Geographical classification as well as some part of discussion was based on the two factors retrieved by principal component. But the second factor, the level of supply of pediatric services use the number of hospital beds for adults but not for children. Further analyses using this indirect proxy require careful interpretations.

This study was based on the number of pediatricians but there may be several municipalities where the number of pediatricians is low but have an efficient system to transfer children who requires tertiary care to a big hospital. I am wondering if the author had ever thought of collecting the number of hospitals which had tertiary care for children. If not, author should mention the study limitation of analyses based on the number of pediatricians.

Title: Widening the disparity…. Does not reflect what the author investigated in this study. I request the author to change the title which is more clear and convey what the author did in this study.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests