Reviewer's report

Title: New Role, New Country: Introducing US Physician Assistants to Scotland

Version: 1 Date: 11 April 2007

Reviewer: Roderick Hooker

Reviewer's report:

General
Reads well. No revisions needed.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

No compulsory revisions needed.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

None. Good review of the literature.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. This is a remarkably thorough review of the literature on US based PAs. The paper addresses an important and timely issue - whether Scotland needs PAs and how they will be incorporated. I found it well reasoned and relatively balanced. The authors use contemporary citations realizing the literature more than 2 decades old is about a different type of PA and productivity was the key indicator all researchers were examining in the 1970s and 1980s.

2. I think some emphasis can be added for readers to understand that the US does not have centralized workforce planning. US Medical schools and PA programs are developed because a medical school dean, president, or some university board thinks this is someone's best interest. Funding for PA programs comes from either the state (State Universities) or private (private colleges and universities). Very little is provided by the federal government. Therefore it is more of a free market system than an NHS type system. That is the interpretation by most observers of the US medical system why PAs have flourished. Scotland is embarking on PA introduction for different reasons. They have plenty of medical schools (4.5) but instead they are taking on this for the experience and to see if a flexible clinician can function in the system that has challenging demographics. I do not require a response but perhaps the authors might find an international audience to their paper will need some of this background.

What next?: Accept without revision

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.