Reviewer's report

Title: Principles and practice underlying development and delivery of high quality educational courses in Africa

Version: 1 Date: 23 October 2008

Reviewer: John Sandars

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Major Compulsory Revisions
[1] The title is misleading and should explicitly mention the development of a QA handbook for improving educational courses in Africa.
[2] I dislike the use of the phrase "brain drain" -in abstract and background
[3] Throughout the abstract and the article, the phrases of "continuing medical education" and "higher education" are used in a mixed way. The authors should make it clear from the outset the context - what type of course are they specifically trying to address?
[4] The methods in the abstract should highlight the iterative/participatory nature of the development of the handbook
[5] Page 7 Curriculum design Should inlude content based on local health priorities as well as Millenium Targets. Also further discussion on delivery methods, including need for specific content and development of generic skills eg literature search or critical appraisal
[6] Page 7 Course Delivery I recommend greater discussion about plagiarism detection - especially the borderline with non-attribution
[7] I cannot find any reference to the importance of student feedback / input into course development and quality improvement. Also role of local health departments in curriculum developments to ensure that local fit for purpose.

Minor Essential Revisions None
Discretionary Revisions None

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 have provided consultancy advice on medical educational development to several low income countries and I provide online courses to similar international
audiences.