Reviewer's report

Title: Identifying Brazilian dentists profile using cluster analysis based on job-related variables and perception about profession

Version: 2 Date: 30 August 2009

Reviewer: Kate Clifford Morgaine

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I thought this an interesting paper that would prove useful for those who are responsible for curriculum development, and educating and training dental professionals.

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
While the aim of the study is clearly stated, why it is important is not made clear. The authors start their paper by stating in quite strong language that graduate profiling is an important part of professional training and curriculum evaluation, and recommend that universities should continually revise their profiles. However, they are not explicit about what kind of contribution the profiles actually make to curriculum development. It would be useful if the authors made that connection more explicit. It would then set the context better for the aim of their study.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
The method selected for this study addresses the aim well. It is both well described and executed. The Two Step cluster analysis is a useful way of distinguishing between occupational sub-groups with in the dataset.

I have some concern that even though the authors knew that Brazil has low internet utilisation they chose to use web-based questionnaires. I concluded, although it is not stated explicitly, that they assumed dentists would be much more likely to be connected to the internet than the general population. Yet in the discussion they conjecture that low internet use could have contributed to their low response rate. It would have been useful to undertake a small ‘non-responders’ survey by telephone to ascertain why they did not respond, particularly checking internet usage.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
Yes

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition
Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported
by the data

The discussion addresses the main findings of the study and makes appropriate conclusions.

While the discussion addressed the aim, the authors missed a chance to relate their findings to the first point they made in the paper, that is, its contribution to professional training and curriculum evaluation. At the very least I would expect some recommendation related to this key issue.

The authors commented briefly on the limitation the use of the internet introduced into the study. However, they didn’t really tease out quite what the limitation was nor how they accounted for it.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found

The title summarises the report but is a little clumsy to read. There are a number of options such as “Identifying the profile of Brazilian dentists using …” or “Profiling Brazilian Dentists using …”

The abstract conveys the content of the report.

7. Is the writing acceptable

The writing, in general, is acceptable, although there are a few words which don’t make sense in the context. For example, in the Background section, last sentence of paragraph 2, adhesion is used to mean addition. It would be useful to edit for grammar and word usage.

A reference is missing from the Discussion section, paragraph 5.

I should like to suggest that the names of variables be written in italics. This would aid the reader in discerning between ordinary prose and the names of variables. For example:

- perception about profession
- type of health care insurance
- report job-related health problems

Minor essential revisions
Edit for grammar and word usage

Discretionary revisions
Consider connecting profiling with recommendations for curriculum development research

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.