Author's response to reviews

Title: A national survey of "Inactive" physicians in the United States: enticements to reentry

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Mario Dal Poz, MD
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Dear Dr. Dal Poz,

Thank you for the opportunity to revise our manuscript, “A national survey of “Inactive” physicians in the United States: enticements to reentry,” (MS: 7626971233973426). We have made changes based on the comments of the reviewers that we think improve the manuscript.

Ms. Rimsza asked for more information on the American Medical Association’s Physician Masterfile, and how active physicians are defined within the Masterfile. On lines 59-63 on page 3 we have described the size of the Masterfile, which has historical and current information on over 1 million physicians in the United States, and how the Masterfile is principally used, which is for AMA membership purposes as well as for credentials verification. The AMA works very hard to keep the information in the Masterfile up-to-date to facilitate those activities.

We describe the how “active” physicians are defined in the Masterfile on lines 65-67 on page 3. “Active” physicians are those involved in direct patient care, medical education, medical research, medical administration or other medical activities and are involved in these activities more than 20 hours per week.

We took the opportunity to further clarify how respondents to our survey who apparently had not left medicine for a significant length of time might have been designated “inactive” in the Masterfile, on lines 88-97, on pages 4 and 5. It is possible these respondents were working less than 20 hours per week in medical education or another medical activity and had chosen to indicate they were semi-retired or temporarily not in practice when last contacted by the AMA for the Masterfile. These respondents were not included in the analyses described in this manuscript.

We gave careful consideration to the discretionary revision suggested by Mr. Lewis that the data might better be expressed in a visual (chart/graph) format. In general, we agree with the idea of a visual presentation. We have, in fact, included several tables with this manuscript. However, as we reviewed the data presented in the tables, we realized that a more visual presentation would require substantial simplification. This would reduce the
amount of information actually presented, and might interfere with the reader’s ability to understand our analysis and findings.

Again, thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to revise the manuscript.

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