Reviewer’s report

Title: Occupational burnout and empathy influence blood pressure control in primary care physicians

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Reviewer: Christophe Berkhout

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Occupational burnout and empathy influence blood pressure control in primary care physicians

Thank you for this innovative and interesting paper. The association between psychological characteristics of health practitioners (burnout level and empathy) and outcomes in their patients is not usual in literature and healthcare quality and safety issues related to these characteristics are important facts to study, as most primary health providers neglect their own (mental) health. For these reasons, it is of my opinion that this paper should be published.

Nonetheless, I have two suggestions for the authors

1) The background section is too long and should be shortened. Mainly, the two paragraphs about the working conditions of health professionals in Spain as being a possible explanation of burnout (p.6, lines 24-45) sound more political than scientific and do not add anything to the core of the paper regarding association of burnout, empathy and systolic BP.

2) The validity of burnout and empathy measurements using the MBI and JSPE scales is (too?) widely described in the background and the methods sections and correctly discussed in the discussion section. It is not the case of the BP measurement. How was BP measured? It is widely described that the way BP is measured is generally heterogenous in primary care (different measure devices, patient standing, sitting, laying, with or without a rest of different durations...). Is it sure that burned out and not empathic health providers measure BP in the same way than not burned out and empathic health providers (mainly regarding rest time)? Data are originated from patients' records where this heterogeneity cannot be assessed, unless all primary care health providers in Spain measure BP with the same devices and the same measure protocol (and I can hardly believe this). The BP measurement heterogeneity is thus a serious limitation to the validity of the results that should be announced in the methods section and discussed in the discussion section. It should also nuance the conclusion.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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Unable to assess

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I am able to assess the statistics

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