Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 2 Date: 02 Apr 2017

Reviewer: Larry A. Green

Reviewer's report:

This study is about important issues in general practice and primary care and of interest to clinicians and policy makers.

The limitations now noted in this revision make clear that the title of the paper and conclusions are an over-reach, not adequately defended by the methods. Example from first paragraph of conclusions: "Our findings indicate that patients under the care of more empathetic and less burnt out family physicians and nurses are more likely to come to the center for BP checks, adhere to prescribed treatment, and work hand in hand with primary care practitioners to attain health goals." There are no data presented to justify these claims. Your acknowledgement of statistical but ?not clinically significant findings takes away the ability to confidently make other claims in the paper. An example of over-reaching is the narrowness of the definition of "management" and the broad claims about management of patients with high blood pressure.

The demonstration of the use of this regional data set for observational research is important and raises the feasibility of using additional methods to strengthen inferences about entire populations and subsets with particular features. You may be weary of revising, but if you are inclined this could be publishable in my view as a preliminary, exploratory study that determined the distribution of burnout and level of empathy in both nurses and physicians in your region, finding potentially important relationships between empathy and burnout and some intriguing statistical association with important patient level variables for which there is evidence that burnout and empathy of clinicians could be affecting clinically important results. This would justify a more rigorous analysis using methods that strengthen the likelihood of observational studies revealing actual "truths" about practice.
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.

No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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