Reviewer's report

Title: Optional part-time and longer GP training modules in GP practices associated with more trainees becoming GPs - a cohort study in Switzerland

Version: 0 Date: 21 Apr 2017

Reviewer: Maria Papadakaki

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for your kind invitation to review this interesting manuscript from Switzerland. I have included some comments for the authors to consider.

Introduction

1. Some introduction about training in Family Medicine is necessary. What is the minimum knowledge and what are the skills required based on EU and international standards? What are the training principles set by accredited bodies in Europe and abroad? An overview of the standards in FM/GP training is necessary not only for the Swiss context, for an international readership.

2. Justification for the study seems to be weak and mis-guiding. Why is this study important? What is the gap that it aims to address? Does it address the need for evaluation of GP training? If so, the introduction needs to have background information on the evaluation standards of medical education. By mentioning that GPs in Switzerland become fewer and fewer, the authors do not justify the necessity for carrying out this study. Besides that, the authors refer to flexible and attractive training conditions for GPs in the recent years that seems to be contradictory. What is the added value of this study? what does it offer to international literature?

Methods

3. The authors claim to have conducted a cohort study. However, the study doesn't seem to be a cohort. Please re-consider this issue.

4. The methods are confusing and poorly described. The "setting" describes GP training in Switzerland, which is already raised in the introduction. The "sampling/recruitment strategy" is described under the "outcome". Important information is still missing such as the total population of residents and practicing GPs, representativeness of the sample, the data collection approach, etc.
5. The following paragraph seems odd. "However, since the evaluation form contained 79 questions, we a priori selected a sample of questions to avoid methodological problems due to overfitting. Each co-author was invited to select those questions that are most likely associated with the exposure (longer vs. shorter GP training) and the outcome (practicing GP by 2016). We aimed to include all factors that were important to 5 of 6 co-authors". It looks as if the study design was decided by 5 out of 6 co-authors conveniently and without theoretical/scientific justification. Please explain.

6. There is no correspondence between the study objectives and the questionnaire items/measurements or the analysis. Why do the authors explore trainers' characteristics? why do they explore satisfaction? There is no background information in the introduction to guide the design of this study. It looks as if the items were randomly selected out of an existing survey without a purpose.

7. Please use the term "perceived competencies" as they were self-rated.

Discussion

8. Both the discussion and the implications are poor in terms of explanations of the study findings based on the local sociocultural context as well as based on the Swiss medical education standards. The authors seem to repeat the findings without a meaningful discussion. They need to explain their outcomes using published evidence and end up with meaningful solutions and recommendations.
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

Declaration of competing interests  
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?
If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal