Reviewer's report

Title: Which positive factors give General Practitioners job satisfaction and make General Practice a rewarding career? A European multicentric qualitative research by the European General Practice Research Network.

Version: 0 Date: 12 Sep 2018

Reviewer: Geoffrey Mitchell

Reviewer's report:

This is an important and original study that has obviously taken a lot of effort to complete. Congratulations to the authors.

The rationale is well described, as are the methods. The multicultural nature of this study presents particular challenges which are outlined in the discussion. I think the methods could mention more about the nature of these and what steps were taken to manage the cultural and linguistic challenges.

As an international reader (Australia) I am not familiar with the place of GPs and primary health doctors in the countries involved. I think a table outlining these would be helpful. In particular - whether the practitioners are practice owners, independent employers, or state employees? What is the place of the GP in each country with respect to gate keeping to the health system? Gate keeping if present gives GPs a powerful place in the medical system, and the absence of this role can marginalise them and render them relatively powerless. It is easy for patients to bypass the GP and go straight to specialists, whether this is appropriate or not. is there any relationship between a gate keeping role and attitudes to the job? (Powerlessness leads to frustration. How to GPs in countries without gatekeeping keep up their morale?) What about the presence of employment controls - where you can work, how you can work and the like. If these are the norm, is there a relationship between lack of control and satisfaction with the role? Are they salaried or paid fee for service? Is there a national insurance scheme available or other system that facilitates or discourages regular attendance to a doctor? Are regular holidays available? Also, how were participating countries chosen? Were some views excluded because of that choice?

The findings have face validity. I do like that allowing GPs independence to place themselves where they like and personalise their practice is important.
There was also a lack of contrary views present in the paper. There were virtually no GPs presenting negative views (although I understand the aim was to gather positive views). Was the selection of GPs biased towards those with a positive view of the profession? Were there participants who were less satisfied with their jobs who struggled to find the positives? The older age of the cohorts does suggest that participants were those whose love of the job may have encouraged them to stay on.

In the long run, the value of this paper lies in how health policy can change in order to encourage people to consider general practice as a career and keep them there. This is done to some extent, but changing established policy settings can be very challenging. Hence I think the recommendations for policy changes could be more explicit. National policy settings on things like gate keeping and salary vs fees, training and formal specialist recognition of GPs are all important in facilitating choice towards a career in general practice. I think the paper could make this point a bit more strongly.

Overall though, an excellent and thoughtful paper.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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.

Yes

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.

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