Reviewer’s report

Title: A survey of the working status of family medicine physicians in clinics and hospitals in Korea

Version: 1 Date: 01 Dec 2019

Reviewer: Robert L Phillips

Reviewer's report:

This is an important effort to understand the status, scope, and changing care patterns of family physicians in Korea. I would need to see the entire survey to know if the contents supported the analyses. The content described in the methods are insufficient to understand the percentages offered in the results; likewise other data elements. I also can't tell if practice in clinics and hospitals are mutually exclusive, or whether some do both. The methods only mention diabetes and hypertension yet the results offer self-reported ranges of what sound like a much broader list of diseases. It is hard to know how reliable some of the self-reported data are such as with chronic care and diseases covered by the NHIS.

There are some missing values in the results, "employment status; doctors employed in and owning clinics made up 34.4% and xxx, respectively."

The findings are mostly exploratory so I have trouble relating them to the discussion. The response rate for the known cohort of 4k+ was only 26% but half of all family physicians were not in the cohort, so it is unclear how representative the responding cohort are of all. The paper mentions the NHIS which looks like it could be a more reliable source for some of the study questions esp related to rates of disease, care management, scope of care, etc. Could at least set up a comparison to the survey data.

Generally I'm uncertain whether the results are valid or reliable enough to offer more than a discussion about the exploratory nature of the paper, or perhaps a way to discuss Korean FM for an international audience. It may be acceptable as a research letter about the exploratory nature of the study.

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?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess
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 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