Reviewer's report

Title: Productivity in medical education research: an examination of countries of origin

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Reviewer: Tetsuro Sakai

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Major Compulsory Revisions

The authors conclude “A relatively small number of authors, networks and countries contribute significantly the literature within medical education”. Given the limitation of the authors’ methodology, I am not so convinced to take the statement as the face value. For example, the authors only counted the number of publications without proper inputs of impact of the publications; the authors were excluded the researchers who would have significant impacts in the field of education due to exclusion criteria such as the researchers from the US who actually contributed the majority (44.3%) of publications. Neglecting these researchers may skew the conclusion. Interestingly, the top three ranked countries per the authors’ definition only contributed 24.4% of publication in total. Using the ranking system in their formula seems to be of interest; however, it is rather misleading. The authors should at least provide the additional information, such as the ranking of the number of publication per institution and per researcher. In such a way, the readers can appreciate which researchers or those from certain institution, rather than country of origin, have contributed the advance of education research. These information is much more helpful and meaningful to know “who the main drivers of medical education research” (page 2 L6-7).

The authors only reported the number of publication. The authors defended the decision not to use h-index as the quality measure. However, since the authors were interested in assessing and identifying the productivity and influence of researchers in the education field, they should provide the information, either using a total citation number or h-index per researchers. In this analysis, the authors do not have to limit themselves in the comparison of the country of origin. They could be able to identify the number of publications per researcher and then identify the h-index of these researchers, which can be done relatively easily. With these information, the readers can be benefitted to identify the most influential individuals in the field.

The bottom line is that the current data and accompanied authors’ net-work do not help the readers much. The data the authors painstakingly collected could have been used much better when they address the above points.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely
related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests.