Reviewer's report

Title: Art-making in a Family Medicine clerkship: How does it affect medical student empathy?

Version: 1 Date: 18 August 2014

Reviewer: Arno Kumagai

Reviewer's report:

The authors have answered most of my comments in a satisfactory manner with the exception of Major Compulsory Revision Comments #1.

Comment #1 Concerned the authors suggestion that their study showed that “arts-making” had an impact on medical students’ empathy; however, this workshop also included creative art, poetry, guided reflection exercises, facilitated discussions on poignant experiences, relaxation, and reflective writing. Consequently, it is difficult to determine whether the creative art portion (including poetry and reflective writing) of the workshop is responsible for any change in empathy detected.

In the revision, the authors have changed the “art-making” to “arts-making” so that it includes creative art, poetry, and reflective writing; however, merely renaming the activity to include “arts” in the plural would still not include the guided reflections and facilitated discussions and thus would still not clearly answer the question of whether arts-making per se impacted students’ empathy. A way around this issue would be to cite this lack of precision in identifying the impact of the fine arts per se on empathy as a limitation to the study.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.