Reviewer's report

Title: Psychological distress and academic self-perception among international medical students: the role of peer social support

Version: 2 Date: 14 July 2014

Reviewer: Raluca Sfetcu

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper which looks at the impact of psychological distress on academic self-perception. Please see below my suggestions for improvement.

1. Peer support: is conceptualized inconsistently, at times as a risk and at times as a protective factor; the paper would gain in clarity if the authors would maintain one perspective across the paper (the comment is valid for all sections of the paper).

2. Academic performance versus academic self-perception; briefly present the reason of selection of the later. References?

3. On page 4 (lines 20-22) it says: "This study therefore evaluated an effect modification of peer social support in the association between psychological distress and poor academic performance." The formulation can be misleading and should be re-formulated to express more precisely the aim of the paper; also "academic performance" instead of "academic self-perception"? see also the discussion section (page 10, lines 17-21)

4. In the analysis section it is not easily understandable that "peer support" was transformed in a risk factor from a protective one or the methods used to achieve it;

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests