Reviewer's report

Title: A model of professional identity formation in student doctors and dentists: A mixed method study

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Reviewer: sylvia cruess

Reviewer's report:

The authors provide an outstanding definition of professional identity and their objective is to lay a theoretical groundwork with the development of such an identity. The article is clear and well-written and is based upon a solid review of the pertinent literature.

I have some difficulty with the statement that there is no previous work that analyzes the process through which professional identity is formed and proposes theoretical frameworks. Certainly the work of Monrouxe, Jarvis-selinger et al, & Frost & Regehr, and Rees all do summarize the process quite well and all do include the three terms that the authors observed.

The paper uses a grounded theory approach which is suitable as are the criteria used for selection of medical and dental students for interviewing. Students who were selected demonstrated an increase of two or more levels of their professional identity based on a validated questionnaire.

Three themes emerge: participation as a quasi-professional; recognition of professional status by others; and the value of extracurricular activities that involve the professional role. The discussion he elaborates on these themes and emphasizes their importance.

This is a well carried out study and the use the validated questionnaire demonstrates an important direction that others can take to evaluate the level or nature of emerging professional identities in medical and dental students.

I recommend some changes. In the first place, the table and figure require labels. Finally, I would recommend that this work not be presented as a theoretical basis for professional identity formation as the literature identifies others of perhaps more importance. While the three themes are important, identity formation is much more complex and there are many more factors at work. Experiential learning, role models, formal teaching-the list goes on and on. Rather the authors would be on more solid ground if they presented their findings as documenting a way of evaluating progress in the development of a professional identity and adding to our knowledge of the three factors that students themselves identified.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

No competing interests