Reviewer’s report

Title: Clinical realism: A new literary genre and a potential tool for encouraging empathy in medical students.

Version: 3 Date: 19 March 2015

Reviewer: jonathon tomlinson

Reviewer’s report:

The authors’ changes have made this much clearer than the original paper, in particular the section on clinical realism and the discussion at the end.

Minor essential revisions:

Line 35 I am not convinced that this paper is using grounded theory, for example (as far as I am aware) GT requires the use of coding, memo-writing, theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation [Sbaraini 2011]. It is not clear from the sections on Methods and Theoretical Approaches how GT was used and why this was GT as opposed to a thematic analysis for example. I note you have responded to Reviewer 1 suggestion that you say that this is a guiding principle.

Line 76. There are a few typos, e.g. line 76 which will need correcting and full-stops or commas are used inconsistently around reference numbers (line 556 for example).

Line 393 The chaos narrative was only minimally defined and the quest narrative not at all. Clearer definitions would show why the quotes were chosen.

Line 553 The links between LICs and narratives haven’t been made very clear. You say LICs enable students to get to know patients but don’t make say how that is similar and/or different from clinical realism/ narratives. I think there are interesting parallels.

Discretionary revisions:

Line 138. There are a number of historical chronic disease narratives including The Diabetic Life by RD Lawrence and others about Parkinson’s disease, Epilepsy, Gout etc. but I think you are right to say that there are not many.

Results. I note the other reviewer’s suggestion that the students’ quotes are labelled 1-6 which I think would be useful. The quotes are quite long and the discussion quite short, but I will leave it to the authors should they wish to change this.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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