Reviewer’s report

Title: Factors important in the choice of a medical career: a national study

Version: 4 Date: 25 May 2015

Reviewer: Phillipa Poole

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have addressed most of my concerns, and the paper reads much better than previously.

The tables are improved, with the addition of the logistic regression adding to the strength of the findings.

Discretionary Revisions:

These relate to the assumptions made by the authors.

1. I believe you need to be more circumspect in your assumption that satisfaction with career is exactly the same thing as 'choosing to study medicine again.' For example it might be that a doctor has developed an illness or changed family circumstances that make it difficult to continue to work as a doctor they are still satisfied, but might have preferred not to study medicine. On the other hand, they might be unsatisfied right now, but would never consider changing their career.

Instead of using the word 'satisfaction' which comes with some interpretation, suggest report as the question was asked.

2. Do you have an position on the purposes of medical school selection, and the optimum outcome (such as a 'satisfied' doctor participating well to their full potential)? If so, (a) is this affecting the interpretation of your results (b) consider being more explicit about your assumptions/biases. There are hints that you do have a position e.g. the word 'excellent' is over-used in the discussion.

3. I am not aware of any selection tool that reliably screens in for the motives you suggest are important. Once it is clear what attributes admissions committees are looking for, applicants will state at interview what will get them good marks (social accountability bias). Another way may be to make applicants much more informed about the realities of modern medicine through information/pseudo-selection experiences in the hope that some may screen themselves out. This of course won't stop everyone.

Level of interest: An article of importance 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:**

I am involved in research related to:

- tracking medical students from selection to career, including validation of selection tools
- women in medicine

I have designed selection policies and processes for our medical school.

I am a female physician.