Reviewer's report

Title: A searchable database of medical education objectives - creating a comparable gold standard

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Reviewer: Inga Hege

Reviewer's report:

This paper and database addresses an important challenge in medical education - the accessibility and transparency of educational objectives across medical schools and disciplines; this is a highly relevant and insufficiently addressed issue.

However, despite the importance of the topic, the manuscript has in my opinion some major shortcomings:

- How is your work relevant to medical educators outside the US? I see that it could be interesting for non-US educators and curriculum manager, but, transferability to other countries/curricula is not addressed in your manuscript. What lessons did you learn? What are your experiences so far? This is related to the next point.

- What use cases and needs are you addressing? How is the database related to the curriculum maps of medical schools? How are educators using the database? What was the aim - just the searchability across disciplines?

- Please be specific about what "national" means and that you focused on objectives and societies in the US. Also, the medical school structure is different in other countries, so, it would help to understand from the beginning that you are referring to US medical curricula.

Abstract:

What are didactic years? Are you referring to the first two clinical years of US medical schools?
Background

1) Very short and does not put the work into broader scientific and international context. What has been done so far in this direction (in the US but also in other countries?). How exactly could an overall database be useful and which problems could be solved?

2) Please be more specific that in your curriculum description you are referring to the US.

3) p3, l8ff: I am not sure how your database helps in identifying gaps and overlaps in curricula, since there seems to be no connection or mapping with curriculum maps of the medical schools.

Utility and discussion

4) What can educators do with the search results? Export them? Could you describe use cases and what experience you have with these? Have you in any way evaluated the database? For non-US educators this would provide valuable information in case they plan something similar with the societies relevant in their countries.

5) p5. line 6-7: This statement might be true for the US, but it is not world-wide. Please be specific here and/or cite similar databases and maybe put your database development in context to such international approaches (e.g. the development of the NKLM in Germany, see https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4580444/)

6) 17-8: I do not understand the second sentence of this paragraph - is there something missing?

7) Minor issues: I am not a native speaker, but there seem to be a few typos and grammar issues
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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