Reviewer's report

Title: Disciplinary boundaries and integrating care: using Q-methodology to understand trainee views on being a good doctor

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Reviewer: Halah Ibrahim

Reviewer's report:

The authors use Q methodology with 38 trainees in the UK to look at their views on generalist training vs specialization. This is an important topic as patient-centered care requires a holistic and multidisciplinary approach. My main concern with the manuscript is that the question of being a "good" doctor was rather confusing in the context of specialty vs. generalist care. I found myself often questioning the relevance of the findings. It is not until the conclusion when the true purpose/finding of this study is stated: "The results of our Q-sort analysis suggest that it may be helpful to understand the relationship between generalism and specialism as less of a dichotomy and more of a continuum that transcends primary and secondary care settings." Perhaps presenting this concept earlier on in the manuscript (with some literature supporting it) might make the paper more cohesive and understandable.

Specific points:

There are minor punctuation errors throughout the manuscript.

The superscript reference should follow the period at the end of the sentence, or the mid-sentence comma.

Line 17- US should be written out as United States (US) when first used.

UK should be written out as United Kingdom (UK) when first used.

Background: describes importance of providing holistic and multidisciplinary care, but unclear why the question focuses on being a "good" doctor as this is only one component of medical care.

It is also unclear why topic of softer skills (empathy, communication) is introduced in the background given that the Q set focuses on topics related to multidisciplinary and generalist vs specialist care- with only 1 or 2 of these questions posed.
Methods:

Q set development- how many medical trainees were part of the pilot? Did they participate in the study?

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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

Unable to assess

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

Yes

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:

Acceptable
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