Reviewer’s report

Title: UKCAT and medical student selection in the UK – what has changed since 2006?

Version: 0 Date: 08 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Dietrich Klusmann

Reviewer's report:

This is a valuable contribution to an understanding of recent changes in methods for student selection. The general trend showing increased adoption of the UKCAT is well described in the discussion section.

However, the presentation of detailed results is sometimes ambiguous, especially regarding the use of the UKCAT in combination with other factors, e.g. on p.7 "Mean factor use of the UKCAT increased from 26% to 39%" could be understood as "the weight of the UKCAT when used in combination with other scores increased from 26% to 39%. Or: "Use of the UKCAT in a weighted combination with other scores increased from 26% to 39% of all medical schools.

The 7 figures are aesthetically beautiful, but overloaded with detailed information, whilst a legend to explain the many shorthands is missing. The use of symbols is not consistent, e.g. in fig. 3 fat lines stand for counts, while in fig. 4 for averages. Tab. 2 entails shorthands for selection methods the meaning of which can only be guessed.

Perhaps the material could be made more transparent if organized not only by the 4 categories supplemented by ad hoc differentiations, but according to a system of attributes, e.g. for the use of the UKCAT in 2018:

Proportion of applicants who sat the UKCAT
What of kind of selection happened before the UKCAT was taken?
What of kind of selection happened after the UKCAT was taken?
If the UKCAT was combined with other factors, show these factors and their weighting
If weighting was used, how were the weights computed?

This could be tabulated with all medical school or with grouping according to similar pattern as row entries

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.

I am able to assess the statistics

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

Acceptable

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