Reviewer’s report

Title: Does growing up with a physician influence the ethics of medical students' relationships with the pharmaceutical industry? The cases of the US and Poland.

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Reviewer: Cheryl Macpherson

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Title: Does growing up with a physician influence the ethics of medical students' relationships with the pharmaceutical industry? The cases of the US and Poland.

Overall, the study addresses an important topic: conflicts of interest, and national differences in aspects of professionalism and related training in medicine. It is a topic worth developing and publishing but the manuscript is not publishable in its current form due to difficulties outlined below which may derive from conceptual weaknesses and/or English as a second language. I recommend revisions with respect to specific comments below.

General

The research question, although not well articulated, is sound and the methods appear to be sound although I am not qualified to assess the statistics used. The paper would benefit from inclusion in the discussion and/or introduction of contextual information regarding medical school curricula and norms regarding what types of relationships with pharma are acceptable (gifts, reps, information). It should also include an outline of related laws/rules/guidelines in the respective countries, or statements of their absence. The results regarding trust in the pharmaceutical industry (Table 3) are confusing because of the negative and positive language used in the survey and discussion (yes/no etc). This undermines the interpretation of the results in the discussion and abstract: that in Poland, medical schools are more trusting of and engaged with pharma than those in the USA.

Abstract

'Occupational ethics' needs to be rephrased - it is not a term usually discussed in medical or bioethics or even in medicine. The research question should be stated or paraphrased here, and a statement about why the survey was conducted and why it compares Poland with Pennsylvania (PA) and the wider USA. The word 'cooperation' in 'cooperation with the pharmaceutical industry' is not clear and needs explanation or replacement in this context.
* Explain and defend how "All of this influenced politics in medical schools" and define 'university based political organizations' pg 5 line 12-14 and 'medical student cooperation' Pg 5 line 44

* Replace the phrase 'medics' which is not used to describe doctors in the USA pg 6 line 22

* Specify the research question earlier, and maybe restructure it around conflicts of interest and/or differences between Poland and PA (How does growing up with a physician influence medical students' relationships with the pharmaceutical industry?), and clarify whether PA adequately reflects medicine in the USA

* Typo: Polish not polish - Pg 10 Line 2

* If they are the same, don't repeat the survey questions - Pg 10 last paragraph

* Briefly describe existing legal and institutional rights of doctors to accept gifts from pharma (eg are students correct in their survey answers about existing rights?) Pg 11 table 2

* A more useful question is whether its an important function that isn't otherwise met Pg 12 line 5 - if it isn't otherwise being met, then mention that in the text

* Interpretation of Table 3 is questionable due to the polarized language used (no/yes and trust/distrust); need to change the language used in the Table and/or better explain it in the text Pg12 table 3

* OTC - spell out in full  Pg 14 line 14

* Existing guidelines/laws/curricular trends in both countries need to be introduced earlier and discussed in light of the study rationale  Pg 14 line 22-30

* Its not clear that the data supports this statement and explanation: "Polish students were more suspicious than those in the US. This can be explained by the crisis of trust that is apparent in many post-communist countries" Pg 15 and See note above re table 3

* The topics addressed in the conclusion should be raised earlier and discussed with the study rationale. The paper should also specify how training in conflicts of interest differs from curricular change; and frame curricula and policy suggestions by outlining those that exist and how they differ in Poland and PA
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.

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.

I recommend additional statistical review

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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