Varieties of research methods

Title: Job satisfaction and turnover intention among Iraqi doctors - a descriptive cross-sectional multi-center study

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Reviewer: Marc Bonenberger

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting manuscript on factors affecting turnover intention among doctors in Iraq. Although the research question is not new, the study on doctors working under difficult and often hostile conditions is interesting and provides new evidence on what factors make doctors working under such conditions leave their country to work abroad. The method is well described and sufficient details are provided to replicate the work. The sample size and thus statistical power is sufficient large with the formula used is provided in the manuscript. The data in general is sound and well controlled and the discussion and conclusions are well balanced and are adequately supported by the data. Unfortunately the manuscript suffers from language problems so that language-editing is necessary. Also more paragraphs are needed to improve legibility. Other observations are as follows:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. I disagree with the definition of turnover intention of the authors, who assessed this intention by asking: “I’m actively seeking alternative employment abroad”. In my opinion actively seeking employment abroad is no longer an intention but already a decision to leave the country. The authors should, therefore, consider changing the term “turnover intention” with “active job search” and also indicating this in the title, or clarify their decision to use this definition of turnover intention.

2. The authors state in the background section that they also studied motivation and migration. However, although motivation and migration are related with job satisfaction and turnover intention, these factors were not studied by the authors.

3. The authors claim that very few studies explore the relationships between job satisfaction, motivation, turnover intention, and migration in countries with healthcare worker shortages. However, several studies on this topic in low- and middle-income countries have been published in recent years. Therefore, this sentence should be modified.

4. Although it can be assumed from the text that the maximum of the total job satisfaction score is “70” this is nowhere stated explicitly in the text nor in Table 2 and should thus be included in both so to improve comprehension. The range of the item scores should also be indicated in Table 2.

5. The results section tends to just repeat the results from the tables, especially the section on the predictors of turnover intention, which repeats all results from Table 4. Only the most important observations should be emphasised or
summarised in the text.

6. The authors state that: “This study established a significant and negative relationship between the turnover intention and job satisfaction, in terms of working conditions, interaction, recognition, responsibility and overall job satisfaction”. However, the job satisfaction sub-scores have not been shown in the results section. Therefore, this statement cannot be made.

7. The authors also state that: “In previous studies, higher job satisfaction has frequently been associated with intention to leave the health care system or even the country”. The opposite is true: previous studies have shown that a lower job satisfaction is associated with turnover intention.

Minor Essential Revisions

8. The citation style of Human Resource for Health is not always followed by the authors in the discussion. This should be corrected.

9. In Table 2 the legend is missing, which explains the abbreviation (WCW for Warr-Cook-Wall job satisfaction scale).

10. The text states that Table 2 is ranked by mean and SD. However, Table 2 is not ranked.

Discretionary Revisions

11. The manuscript would be improved when the results from the analysis of differences in overall job satisfaction between doctors with and without turnover intention are also shown in a table, either by including the results in Table 2 or in separate table.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests