Reviewer’s report

Title: Future requirements for and supply of ophthalmologists for an aging population in Singapore

Version: 1  Date: 15 June 2015

Reviewer: Yaping Jin

Reviewer’s report:

In view of the aging population in Singapore, this study forecasts the future demand for ophthalmologists in Singapore with regard to workforce and training requirements from 2015 to 2040. Under 4 reasonable constructed scenarios, the authors concluded that the current supply of ophthalmologists in Singapore will not be able to meet the future needs. Given the long timeline required to become an ophthalmologist, this work is important and timely for healthcare administration and the public.

I have the following remarks for considering before this work to be published:

• The Background and Methods sections are too long, especially the Methods section, nearly 14 pages long! A shortened manuscript may be concise and help readers not to lose interest of reading it. Some suggested cut: on page 7, paragraph 3 may be more suitable in Discussion section, rather than in Background section; the description on page 11: “Immigration is the transition from foreign labor to permanent residents status (now able to reside indefinitely in Singapore) and is determined ...” can be shortened to “Immigration is determined by ...” etc.

• Optometrists provide primary eye care and are expanding their services. It is not clear how the authors considering the role of optometrists in sharing the vision care crisis caused by aging population? The eye care provided by optometrists is different from the eye care provided by family physicians.

• Results section in both Abstract and the main text, it is clear for future demand on residents intake per year, but there is no clue what is the current resident intake in Singapore?

• Figure 1 shows the trend of eye care workforce in Singapore from 2003 to 2012, a line graph, rather than a bar graph, may be better suitable for such kind of purposes. The labels used for A and C are very difficult to distinguish in a white-black hard copy. Don’t understand why we need to care “non-subsidized patients” and “subsidized patients” in Figure 1A?

• On page 5, 2nd paragraph, line 5-7, too many numbers are presented which causes confusing. Perhaps only the numbers in parenthesis are needed. This cut will also be helpful to shorten the manuscript.
• Comment: Page 12, due to lack of data, it was not possible to project the prevalence of eye diseases among the young population. The young are mostly affected with myopia and may most likely go to see an optometrist, rather than an ophthalmologist. Thus this lack of data may not greatly affect the reported results?

• Page 20, last paragraph, please give the source of the cited 20% and 90% assumption.

• There are formatting or typing errors in multiple places of the manuscript, e.g., page 6, paragraph 1, line 2, “... in Singapore (Zhang et al, 2014),” page 19, “…from 2015 to 2040 the fraction...”, page 25, “…proportional to the increase of 40+...” Please proof read the manuscript!

• Page 27, why these “i-iV” were not included in References?

• Not sure the journal has enough space to publish Figure 2-4?

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests