Reviewer's report

Title: The effects of austerity measures on quality of healthcare services: a national survey of physicians in the public and private sectors in Portugal

Version: 0 Date: 18 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Catherine Mary Desroches

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting article about physicians views of the effect of austerity measures in Portugal. These types of studies are important to assess the impact of these measures on providers.

I have the following comments:

1. Background - this section needs to be edited and significantly sharpened. It is difficult at times to know what the authors are trying to say.

   page 3, line 22 - please briefly describe the 2008 crisis”.

   page 3, line 26 - The paragraph needs more information about what happened in Portugal.

   Page 3, line 53 - I don't understand what the authors mean by specificity.

   page 4, line 4 - give examples of contingencies

   page 4, line 4 (2nd sentence) - very vague. I have no idea what you mean.

   page 4, line 51 - perhaps this section should be the Background.

   page 6, line 26 - this is a very poor response rate and the data is likely biased as the respondents were different from non-respondents. The lack of ability to complete a non-response analysis is a serious limitation and should be addressed.

   page 7, line 4 - what did you decide would be suitable.

   page 7, line 58 - why not combine specialities? With a small sample and such a large number of specialities, you are likely to get some spurious findings.
Results - In general, I found this section difficult to follow, particularly the moderating analysis. More clarity is needed here because it is difficult to understand the overall trend. The section on specialty particularly suffers from this problem.

Discussion

1. The first two paragraphs simply repeat what is in the findings section. Delete or consolidate this material.

2. The specialty results are not explained well but I think that is because there are too many specialties included in the model.

3. Add a limitations section.

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

Needs some language corrections before being published
**Declaration of competing interests**

Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal.