Reviewer's report

Title: Age-related differences in working hours among male and female GPs: an SMS-based time use study

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Reviewer: Elaine Pelley

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript is clear and presents interesting data. I appreciate the well-written and reflective introduction to this complex workforce issue to put this data in context. It is important to recognize that many gender-based societal factors influence these findings, not simply women's personal choices.

I recommend the section describing the text message survey be revised for clarity. On line 109, it says "The text messages asked GPs if they were conducting an activity directly or indirectly related to their patient or, alternatively, not related at all." Does this mean that they were asked:

(1) working directly or indirectly with patients vs. working but not directly with patients? Or

(2) working directly or indirectly on patient care vs. not working/leisure time?

In the box on line 121, it states: "A GP who replied 13 times about an activity, patient-related or not, would work 13 x 3=39 hours." This would seem to mean that any reply was interpreted as "working" and that you mean option 1 above (and if the GP was not working, they did not reply at all). But the phrase activities "not related at all" would seem to reference leisure time. Recommend clarifying this and using the same wording on line 109 as you use in the box on line 121.

My other suggestion is to indicate whether the GPs involved in this study were all known to be "full time." Is this gap in work hours seen despite reported "full time" work? Or is this simply a reflection that more of the female GPs work part time? It would seem a different problem from a workforce planning perspective if the female GPs state they are working part time than it is if they state they are working full time and yet are working fewer hours.
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