Reviewer's report

Title: The impact of workforce redesign policies on role boundaries in generalist podiatry practice: Expert member views within the professional body

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Reviewer: Wesley Vernon

Reviewer's report:

1. This article is timely and as noted by the authors has important implications for the podiatry profession, helping to bring out issues for the generalist practitioners and describing the situation of and possible future direction for that particular group who currently constitute the bulk of the podiatry workforce.

2. There have been an increasing number of sociological studies in podiatry in recent times, some of which have been of variable standard. It has been a pleasure to review this paper which is again sociological and is well written and of exceptionally high quality.

3. Introductory points are well made, well referenced and well justified.

4. As a NHS service manager I recognise much of the scenario described through this work.

5. On page 4 there is a short paragraph reading "The employment of newly qualified chiropodists/podiatrists......through to....conditions treated within the NHS" On reading this paragraph I had a little difficulty in relating the second sentence to the point made in the first sentence. Please could the authors consider a minor re-wording or elaboration of the second sentence to help the readers understanding of the link between the two sentences given here.

6. On page 9 the referenced statement is made "Professional ideology suggests that the professions exist for the benefit of any member of society who has need of their expertise". This referenced statement was made in 1973. As this belief was therefore stated over 40 years ago could changes in the modern world where public services are stretched more than ever before make this past ideal no longer achievable (i.e. Could the open association referred to here be a past Utopian ideal that can no longer be met in practical terms). Please could the authors consider covering such a point in their interpretation given here?

7. In the conclusion is it possible that one contributory factor to some of the specialist roles in podiatry developing further than generalist roles could be due to the higher educational demands being placed on these roles? (e.g. Masters degrees being a requirement of a specialist post, doctoral qualifications being required for consultant roles etc). Could such enhanced education lead to further research in the specialist fields which in turn leads to the development of a more persuasive evidence base and therefore improved chances of commissioners
funding services of such specialist nature? In other words it may be more than the credentials offered by such higher education but the additional potential this gives to the individual and the collective group. It may be appropriate for the authors to consider this possibility in their concluding deliberations.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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