**Title**: Blowing the Whistle: Perceptions of Surgical Staff and Medical Students in a public South African Hospital

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**Review Comments**

**Reviewer 1**

1. In the introduction, the issues highlighted in relation to whistleblowing have been in the setting of Britain re: NHS. So why are we studying SA without a description of the SA setting? (Introduction-page 3)
2. Needs to have clear definition of terms: what was the operational definition of whistle blowing, adverse events etc. (Methods – page 3)
3. How were the data collection tools distributed? – electronically or hard copies? (Methods – page 4)
4. Was there a calculated sample size? (Methods – page 4)
5. What was the universe of potential respondents stratified by group ie surgeons, medical students, anesthetists etc? What were the numbers like for various grouping – doctor disciplines, medical students? What samples were allocated for each stratum? (Methods-page 4)
6. Data instruments: open ended?
7. Mean age of 26 years: maybe for medical students, for surgeons it is preposterous? Provide the stratification of ages into surgeons and students (Results- page 5 / Table 2).
8. Presentation of results especially the figures and tables poor (Results – page 5 - 6).
9. The idea of combining views of surgeons with those of medical students does not sound right. Those are two completely different populations with completely different world views.
10. What is the definition of reportable events or problems? (Discussion - page 7)
11. “…introducing Schwartz rounds to minimize hierarchal attitudes” What is this? (Discussion -page 7)

**Reviewer 2**

Well written. Much need article in the SA setting. Paucity of literature locally and this is a refreshing read. My questions are as follows:

1. Why only one of the three hospitals within the local health system were surveyed?
2. Why were the surgeons represent the majority of the group included?
3. What exactly are the ethical issues that you're trying to raise?