Reviewer's report

Title: Impact of a task focusing strategy on perceived stress levels and performance during a simulated cardiopulmonary resuscitation: A randomized controlled trial

Version: 2 Date: 7 December 2012

Reviewer: Joyce Yeung

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript.

This study is yet another insightful research into human behaviour and human factors during cardiac arrests by Dr Hunziker’s group. The group has consistently contributed to this area of research.

The study was well written and clear in its aims and objectives. It raised interesting points about perceived level of stress and feeling overwhelmed and proposed a simple but effective coping mechanism that can be employed. There are some limitations but these were well discussed within the manuscript.

On balance I feel that the study was ambitious in its nature, given that the medical students were untrained in ACLS/ALS skills and have had limited training. Their perceived level of stress will be admitted high, having to remember the algorithm and also apply their knowledge. The simple intervention may simply not been enough to lead to a significantly decreased level of stress and improved quality of CPR (hands on time). But I am happy that you have discussed this in your manuscript.

My thinking is that a comparative measurement of ‘stress’ of an ALS scenario before the intervention and after (split into interventional and control group) may have been more revealing.

The composition of the team supporting the participants and how well they are reacting and working together as a team may also have a bearing on perceived stress levels. Please can you comment on this.

It would be helpful if the authors include a brief description of leadership statements and their relevance to the readers who may not be familiar with their previous work.

I feel that this study helps shed light on the complex interaction of human behaviour during cardiac arrests which should be interesting to the journal's readers.

Level of interest: An article of importance 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'