Reviewer's report

Title: Peer Role-Play and Standardised Patients in Communication Training: The Student Perspective on Acceptability, Realism, and Effect - A Comparative Study

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Reviewer: Myriam Deveugele

Reviewer's report:

This paper deals with a very important topic: are SP better than PR in communication training for students? As we all know SP is expensive in time and money, it is necessary to compare them with other didactical forms.

In general the research is done well; the methods are sound, the results clear. I would like this paper to be published, but the article is too long and needs profoundly revision.

Specific:

Introduction: too long, the first paragraph is not necessary in this paper and can be shortened like 'communication has proved his efficiency; therefore training of students must be done carefully'. After that please give a comparison of didactical methods, training versus lectures, SP versus PR... and give pro and contra. End with the conclusion that training is needed, that lecturing alone is not effective, but that it is not known if SP are better than PR. Handle SP and PR as equal, at this moment it reads as if you favorite SP. Give the rationale to start the research in pediatrics.

End the introduction with clear research questions.

Methods:

This section must be very clear and has several topics: the research material (how the cases were chosen, the development of the questionnaires, set the questionnaire in attachment please,...); the selection of the participants: students and teachers, SP, training of SP and the way PR will be prepared; feedback from teachers, SP and peers; power calculation; statistical methods.

Results (is a separate paragraph)

Preliminary results: description of the student groups, of the SP, of the trainers, results of the questionnaires on age, sex,...,

Results: the numbers and significances without any discussion

Discussion

Do not repeat what was already said in the introduction, in the method or result section. Start the discussion with main findings, two or three sentences. Then discuss the main findings one after the other, put your results in relation to literature. Skip the paragraph 'standardized parents'

I have one extra comment on the content: in fact there is little difference SP or
PR. Only concerning the effect of training SP are preferred. Maybe students like to see other people playing, it is more fun to have SP in the course. Comment on that please.

Limitations of the study must deal with limitations; report the weaknesses of this study.

Small questions: p8 'longitudinal study' what do you mean?

'Pay off' may not be the right word if you mean 'overall results'

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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