Reviewer's report

Title: Developing counseling skills through pre-recorded videos and role play: a pre- and post-intervention study in a Pakistani medical school.

Version: 3 Date: 24 September 2009

Reviewer: Lynn Y Kosowicz

Reviewer's report:

Review of revised manuscript:

Overall, the authors have done a good job responding to comments and incorporating changes to improve their manuscript.

Major Compulsory Revisions:
The first and third have been adequately addressed.

I remain concerned that the "intervention" is more than just the training with videos and role-play, but also the 2 week community rotation (and other intervening experiences before the 6 month retest). I agree with the authors that a delayed test of effectiveness has merit, but their conclusions should reflect the fact that they are unable to tell which intervention(s) account for the results (and they do appropriately address this in the limitations). The authors state in their methods section "Our intervention included a two-week rotation with the community medicine department" yet, the conclusion reads "Videos and role play are effective modes of teaching counseling skills to medical students" Perhaps rewording the conclusions to indicate that the videos and role play in addition to clinical experience were effective would be a more accurate reflection of the intervention.

Minor Essential revisions and Discrionary revisions are adequately addressed.

A couple of minor grammatical suggestions:

In the Discussion:

1. currently reads: "It is unanimously agreed amongst members of international graduate medical education and physician licensing boards that good counseling skills of health care providers will result in high-quality care provision through accurate flow of information between healthcare individuals, teams and patients but increased physician and patient satisfaction [17]." (the “but” doesn’t flow- should it read "will result not only in..." and then, "but also increased.....")

2. Currently reads "A variety of teaching and evaluation tools are being developed to effectively incorporate CIS into physicians and perform a
standardized assessment" (awkward- maybe change to "effectively incorporate CIS into physician training and standardized performance assessments")

3. Currently reads: "Prerecorded videotapes and objective assessment through role playing by trained facilitators are simple and cost effective alternative." (should be alternatives)

Congratulations to the authors on their educational intervention and manuscript.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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