Reviewer's report

Title: A near-peer teaching program designed, developed and delivered exclusively by foundation doctors for final year medical students sitting the final objective structured clinical examination (OSCE).

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Reviewer: Matthias Knobe

Reviewer's report:

This article describes a near-peer teaching program, designed and presented by junior physicians. The target group was students in their final year, awaiting the OSCE. The program consisted of lectures and small group seminars, covering core areas of medicine and surgery. Course evaluation was accomplished by a feedback questionnaire. The feedback showed good results regarding their personal confidence and OSCE preparedness. The authors conclude with stating that the role of junior doctors teaching medical students in a formal structured environment is very valuable and should be encouraged.

In general, the paper is well-written. The title and abstract clearly described the study, reasons for the study, method of the study, and results of the study very clearly and concisely. The methods as outlined are informative if one wished to replicate of the study. The results were clearly stated and the discussion is mostly clear. Limitations were discussed, including the importance of considering volunteer tutors resulting in skewed results (selection bias?).

The concept of peer assisted learning is an important and topical issue but the paper does not advance the concept any further than already published work. The authors noted past research with peer teaching as having positive outcomes for student learning. Furthermore, there is a previous rarity of studies that compare both peer and traditional teaching. Therefore, a comparison group for teachers is missing. A group of consultants, for instance, could serve as the rule. However, with respect to the target group, the OSCE results would be very interesting, in comparison to students without such an OSCE preparation. In addition, the fact that there is only a qualitative evaluation diminished the strength of the study.

The question is why should one expect different results from junior doctors acting as near-peer tutors? I would like to see an argument for that in the introduction and perhaps further in the discussion section. In the discussion, the authors argue that there is limited research into the effectiveness of near-peer led teaching programs for large groups. This hypothetical theme could be more succinctly written as a basis for a more convincing study concept. Therefore, the introduction and the discussion should be focused on the peer-teaching of large student groups and should include a well-designed hypothesis.

However, there is a lack of form regarding the style of quotation, and regarding the table legends. The cases should be show in the table, not only percentages.
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.