Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of effectiveness of instruction and study habits in two consecutive clinical semesters of the Medical Curriculum Munich (MeCuM) reveals the need for more time for self study and higher frequency of assessment

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Reviewer: Matthias Knobe

Reviewer's report:

In general, the paper is well-written. The study focused on the topic "assessment for learning instead assessment of learning". 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.

Critique: Limitations were not discussed, including the importance of considering likely highly motivated students (with high return rates in this group) resulting in skewed results (selection bias?). Reliable comparison groups with multiple (ideal: more than two tests) testing in surgical medicine and in internal medicine education are missing. The comparison "surgical versus internal medicine" is not free from bias (multicenter study could help). The authors noted past research focusing on frequent testing as having positive outcomes for student learning. However, with respect to the target group, the OSCE results (or other assessment methods for competence) would be very interesting, in comparison to students without a multiple testing. There are no learning outcomes or achieved levels of competence. In addition, there is no statistical testing for differences between the two groups (quotient TSS/QI). This diminished the strength of the study.

The conclusion, "increased test frequency potentially has a positive influence on the quality and the quantity of students' studies and thus advances learning outcomes" has to be revised. The results show only the quantity of students' studies, neither the quality nor the learning outcomes! (take more conservative phrases)

However, there is a lack of form regarding the style of quotation (same: 3 and 6. The cases should be show in the figures, not only percentages.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'