Reviewer's report

Title: Effectiveness of an Ultrasound Training Module for Internal Medicine Residents

Version: 2 Date: 15 July 2011

Reviewer: Mary Lawson

Reviewer's report:

This was a clearly presented research study. The authors have clearly attempted to design a study that has practical application to their area and they should be commended for their efforts. The abstract is clear and succinct and provides an accurate summary of the work conducted. The introductory section is excellent and provides a good contextualisation of the previous relevant research and the current study context.

The methods are clearly described. A diagrammatic representation of the study design would be very helpful (discretionary revision but would be very helpful!).

The authors have used self-reported confidence as their outcome measure. They demonstrate some appropriate caution with the interpretation of the results. They acknowledge in their discussion that they didn’t have an objective measure of skill. This is entirely appropriate but could also be enhanced by referral to the extensive literature that demonstrates a lack of correlation between confidence and competence. Equally, some mention of the potential dangers of over-confidence (if associated with a lack of skill) in terms of a potential inability to self-limit in clinical practice. This counters the argument that the training provided would contribute to patient safety and so it would be an important point for the authors to address in their discussion.

I am very unsure about and totally unfamiliar with the use of the term “Knobology”. Is this a colloquialism and, if so, its use should be avoided.

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