Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Can Goal Orientation Theory Provide a Useful Motivational Perspective for Explaining Psychosocial Attributes of Medical Students?

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 15 October 2011

**Reviewer:** Willy Lens

**Reviewer’s report:**

Can goal theory provide ....

I suggest writing “Achievement Goal Theory” (AGT) and “achievement goal orientation” rather than the too general label “Goal Orientation”.

pp. 5-6

A more detailed discussion of the definition of the three achievement goal orientations is needed to help readers who are unfamiliar with the AGT to understand why the authors expect a relationship with psychosocial abilities and frustration tolerance. I agree that the authors did not include the task goal-avoidance orientation, but they should say why they did not measure it.

p. 6 Such findings suggest (NOT suggests)

p. 7

I agree that achievement goal orientations will predict LEARNING (also of communication skills) but why would they be related to students’ frustration tolerance”? Via which processes? Please explain.

p. 8 Refer to those previous studies on which your hypotheses are based, especially for the hypothesis regarding LFT.

p. 8

Why did the authors not measure the achievement goal orientations at the beginning of the course if they see them as predictors of learning outcomes? Experiences during the course (with the course, the teacher, the class climate) may affect students’ achievement goal orientations and the test scores assessed at the end of the course (as was done in this study). But that would probably only affect mean scores and not the correlations and regressions.

p. 10 Say explicitly that these t-tests are paired samples t-tests.

p. 11 Why did you expect that performance approach goals would not be positively related to learning outcomes? There is a lot of empirical data showing that this goal orientation is not always maladaptive.

p. 11 for which variables did you control? I do not find them in Table 3. On p. 10 you say that age and gender were not included in the regression equations.
p. 11 bottom: Only the performance approach goal orientation was positively related to LFT. Performance avoidance goal orientation was positively correlated with LFT (.33; see Table 2) but the beta was not significant (.09; see Table 3)

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

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

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.