Reviewer's report

Title: A Randomized Controlled Pilot Trial Comparing the Impact of Access to Clinical Endocrinology Video Demonstrations with Access to Usual Revision Resources on Medical Student Performance of Clinical Endocrinology Tasks

Version: 1 Date: 2 April 2013

Reviewer: aidan Byrne

Reviewer's report:

The subject of the study is of major interest with conclusions that are of relevance to large areas of medical education. However, the study involves a single centre with very small numbers of students making generalisation difficult. The question is well posed and the methods are appropriate with sound statistical analysis.

Major

The introduction does not include any theoretical background or definition of the educational terms used, especially, "task", "skill" and "competence". Terms such as educate, teach, demonstrate and instruct are used interchangeably.

The educational intervention is described in terms of format (video) but not in terms of its intended educational method.

The difference between the groups detected by this study is very large and inconsistent with the effect observed in other studies. The text does not make it clear whether the assessment was taken by all students in the year or only by participants. If the assessment was only associated with this study, then the students excluded from the videos would have no incentive to study for it.

The comments in the discussion relating to clinical performance and especially clinical outcomes are not justified as this study is confined to a formal assessment setting of early phase students.

The references mainly describe studies of clinical skills rather than history/examination skills and are a limited selection from the available literature. There is limited reference to the problems of video/web based learning.

Although the number of viewings are described, there is no data on the time spent by students on each video.

Minor

Page 9 para 2 - (??) criterion

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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