Reviewer's report

Title: Students Benefit from Developing their Own Emergency Medicine OSCE Stations A Comparative Study Using the Matched-Pair Method

Version: 5 Date: 26 May 2013

Reviewer: Sigrid Harendza

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the revision of the manuscript. It has improved greatly in terms of coherence and understandability and is a pleasure to read. A few aspects still remain unclear and need to be addressed.

Major compulsory revisions:

1. There is still confusion in the methods section of the abstract. Did the intervention group develop and test “its own examination stations”? This would mean that they developed the stations they were later on actually tested and rated in. As I understand it the intervention group designed and tested emergency medicine OSCE station as an exercise but was later on tested in other emergency medicine OSCE stations designed by the teaching staff. Please clarify this aspect in the abstract and please also clarify it in the last paragraph of the introduction. The term “their own OSCE stations” should better be avoided throughout the whole manuscript.

2. Thank you for providing information about the curriculum in Leipzig. Please cite the website of the catalogue of learning objective in the methods section as reference including date of access. It should be adapted twice in the method section.

3. If I understand it correctly the intervention group also tested the stations that they had developed as participants and raters whereas the control group did not. The word “self-OSCE” is a bit misleading. It should be changed to testing their “self-made stations in a simulated OSCE” or a similar phrase, e.g. test-OSCE, in the method section to emphasize the difference. Please change the term you introduce for this throughout the whole manuscript.

4. As the OSCE circuits were set up in parallel, please provide information whether the intervention and the control group were tested in the same circuit or in different ones.

5. As a total of 26 from 321 students participated in this study it would be interesting for the reader to know what the mean and SD was for the remaining 295 students in the OSCE. Please provide these figures in a sentence in the results section so the reader can compare it to the 223 points that the control group reached. No statistics need to be calculated.
6. It is described that some stations had checklists and some stations were rated by global rating. How was the standard setting done for the stations that had global rating, i.e. how did raters judge when to give e.g. 1 or 4 points and how was this trained in the rater training so each raters used the same standards? Please provide some information about this.

7. I would like to address again one comment from the previous review which I apparently have not been able to express clearly enough and I still do not understand it clearly from the revised manuscript. The “test OSCE group”, the 20 students who were the test group for the real OSCE before it was implemented, reached 223 of 250 points in it without having had any emergency training. The 13 students from the control group of this study, who had had emergency training, also reached 223 points in the then real OSCE after their emergency training. To me this seems a bit worrisome with respect to the effect of the emergency training itself (only the 13 students from the intervention group reached more points) and this should be commented on in the discussion section.

Minor Essential Revisions

8. Please change the German abbreviation POL to the English abbreviation PBL throughout the manuscript where it occurs.

9. Please provide means in a similar way throughout the manuscript either all with one or all with two digits behind the comma.

10. In table 3, please provide all OSCE means with a comma in the control group like it is done for the intervention group.

11. In table 4, please use dots instead of commas for the numbers.

**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:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.