Reviewer’s report

Title: Why should I prepare? A mixed Method Study exploring the Motives of medical undergraduate Students to prepare for educational Activities

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Reviewer: Sören Huwendiek

Reviewer’s report:

Aalbers et al. describe the results of a mixed method study exploring the motives of medical undergraduate students to prepare for skills training sessions.

Overall, this is a well designed and well written paper which is of interest for the medical education community.

I have few suggestions for improvement, which I however envision as compulsory:

Title:

The title should be more specific: “Why should I prepare? A mixed Method Study exploring the Motives of medical undergraduate Students to prepare for skills training sessions”

Abstract:

Methods section: number of students enrolled in both study parts should be given.

I would rather name your interviews “short group interviews”. With “focus groups” the reader have another methodology in mind.

Methods:

As the name “focus groups” imply another methodology (less students, more time) I strongly suggest to use e.g. “short group interviews” throughout the whole paper.

It should also be clearly written in the methods part which questions the students were given in the group interview sessions, like a “question route”. E.g. I could not find a statement in the methods part which makes clear that only the preparation for skills training sessions were addressed.

Page 8: “They actively involved all the students in the discussion and gave no examples of answers or summaries, since this could steer the discussion.”

It is hard to imagine to involve e.g. 12 students actively in a discussion within a 15 min interview. I think this should be less strong communicated.

Page 14: “Finally, students could indicate whether nine specific interventions would or would not improve their
preparation in the future.” I could not find the results to this in the paper; these should be included.

Discussion:

Limitation:

Page 19: I disagree with the authors: in complex themes it might be much more promising to have less but more in-depth real focus group discussions. In 15 minutes interviews with sometimes even up to 12 participants you can not at all expect to come to the ground of complex problems. This should be stated as a real shortcoming. This has also implications on the quantitative study part.

Table 3: “Practical skills are “skills” that need to be taught in the training, not from paper“ . This is rated as motivating for preparation. I am wondering whether some items were not clearly enough formulated to the students to give valid answers.

**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.