Reviewer's report

Title: Comparison of the medical students' perceived self-efficacy and the evaluation of the observers and patients

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Reviewer: Rashmi Kusurkar

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Review report Rashmi Kusurkar BMC ME manuscript, “Comparison of the medical students' perceived self-efficacy and the evaluation of the observers and patients”

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   Comment: The question has been defined clearly.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   Comment: Yes.

3. Are the data sound?
   Comment: Yes.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Comment: Seems so.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   Comment: Discussion can be written in a much better way.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   Comment: No, this section is actually missing in the paper.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   Comment: Don’t know.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Comment: Yes.

9. Is the writing acceptable?
   Comment: The paper will benefit from major revisions in the introduction and discussion sections. The level of English is acceptable.

All the revisions suggested are for improving the paper, so I guess they are
“Discretionary revisions”.

Overall comments: The study is well-designed with the correct methods and approach. The conclusions are supported by the results. The introduction and discussion sections will benefit from revisions detailed below.

Abstract
Well-written and captures the essence of the paper.

Introduction
The introduction is too broad. The first few sentences don’t really add anything to the current study. I would suggest to begin with setting the stage for why the study was carried out in terms of implications.

The difference between self-assessment of performance and assessment of self-efficacy should be described in the introduction. Currently it becomes clear to the readers only towards the end of the paper.

Method
Some jargon needs to be reduced. The meaning of terms like “medical candidate programme” was not clear. The setting needs to be described in a better way.

The first three sentences of the statistical analysis need revision. They are written in a way which is difficult to understand. The estimate used needs to be explained in greater detail.

The explanation on ethical approval seems satisfactory.

Results
The response rate does not specify the percentages of men and women who responded nor is there any analysis of the perception of self-efficacy between the two genders. There are studies which have brought to light that men have a perception of higher self-efficacy than women with equal performance. (Kusurkar RA, Croiset G, Ten Cate TJ. Implications of gender differences in motivation among medical students. Medical Teacher 2012, Early Online. DOI: 10.3109/0142159X.2012.737056). I recommend to add gender differences or absence of gender differences to the paper.

Discussion
Needs revision. It does not capture the implications of the findings in an adequate manner. The limitations of the study have not been described. The sentence, “As a consequence, we did not expect to achieve exact agreement between the ratings of the observers and students, and any speculation about which of the ratings are most reliable are irrelevant” in the discussion is offensive to the readers and should be eliminated. More discussion is required on the last two sentences in the discussion section. The authors need to specify that the self-efficacy assessment
can be used as a useful tool in formative assessments, but not in summative assessments. It could be a useful addition to student portfolios.

Conclusions
This section is missing in the main manuscript, though it has been included in the abstract.

Tables
Clearly structured.

Figures
Figure 1 is not necessary for the paper and can be deleted.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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.