Author's response to reviews

Title: An electronic portfolio for quantitative assessment of surgical skills in undergraduate medical education

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To the Editor of BMC Medical Education

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Dear Editor:

Authors are deeply grateful again to the comments issued by the editor and reviewers. We reviewed the manuscript taking into account the editor’s comments and concerns. We would like this revision satisfy your suggestions and demands.

We tried to place the work in a more focused context so that readers may have in the introduction of a brief reference to the logbooks and their use in medical education. Logbooks are used more in graduate learning than undergraduate, because they consist of a list of tasks or objectives that students should carry out, but lack of space for reflection. Their most common format is paper as often require the signature of the clinical tutor to validate the implementation of the activities. Logbooks usually target on justification of diseases or procedures that students must have seen, rather than learning skills. Our portfolio not only proposes a series of practical goals that students must attain, but offered a quantitative automatic feedback and space for reflection.

We also put a reference in the introduction to the role of reflection in medical education and how the portfolios, especially electronic portfolios can facilitate learning through reflection plus feedback and collection of evidence.

The European Space for Higher Education (ESHE) is the framework for the design of training programs in European universities. Following ESHE criteria, the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation has set the guides to Spanish universities developing their Programs and learning objectives, as did the University of Seville and we have stated it in the manuscript, quoting reference timely.

Our work focused exclusively on the assessment of the usefulness of the tool portfolio in the students’ learning. It was felt that the deep knowledge of the capacity of the portfolio to induce the self-tracking and self-assessment of learning by students would constitute the appropriate basis for future research involving teachers.

The University of Seville Department of Surgery stands cutting at 80 % for fitness of students in practical skills. This percentage is higher than passing theoretical content, which is situated in 5 out of 10, and thus has been indicated in the manuscript.

All authors and coauthors worked in the revision of the manuscript and have given their final approval of the version to be published if it is accepted.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

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