Author's response to reviews

Title: Evaluation of Standardized Doctor's Order Sets as an Educational Tool for Undegraduate Medical Students

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Version: 3 Date: 16 May 2013

Author's response to reviews: see over
Reviewer # 1

Major Compulsory Revisions

Comment 1:

“Assessment of knowledge retention and acquisition: Please clarify exactly what this retention period is and if it is constant for all trainees. If not, what is the range? Most would consider an end of rotation questionnaire to capture knowledge acquisition but not retention. If the assessment is capturing only knowledge acquisition, comments on knowledge acquisition (without the retention) will need to be revised throughout the manuscript.

We agree with the reviewer that the questionnaires are mainly assessing knowledge acquisition and not retention. As suggested by the reviewer, changes reflecting this issue have been made throughout the manuscript (Page 4 Paragraph 2, Page 13 Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3).

Minor Essential Revisions

Comment 1:

“Test scores: Can the test score results be presented as a percentage? It would make the results more easily interpretable.”

The measurement of test score is a continuous variable and the reporting is based on the comparison of the mean values. Thus, it would not be appropriate for these values to be reported as percentages. We have provided the standard deviation of the distribution of the test scores.

Reviewer #2

Minor Revisions

Comment 1:

“I appreciate the efforts to clarify the grading of the questionnaire. Given the subjective nature of the admission orders, and the variability of student responses, further data is
needed. Please present the kappa value of agreement between the two faculty members grading the admission orders.

We agree with the reviewer that it is important to assess agreement between two faculty members grading the questionnaires given the subjectivity nature of the admission orders and the variability of student responses. We have provided the kappa value of agreement between the members and are added to the Results Section (Page 10, Paragraph 3). We also added discussion of the results of agreement in our Discussion Section (Page 14 Paragraph 1).

Comment 2:

“Although the authors purport to be evaluating both knowledge acquisition and retention, the study design can really only assess knowledge acquisition. Given the heterogeneity of the populations and the inability to present any data as to when students were exposed to the standardized order sets, retention cannot be claimed. This can truly only be assessed with a post-questionnaire administered months after the rotation has ended. The manuscript should be revised to reflect only knowledge acquisition.”

Similar to the first reviewer’s comment, we agree with the reviewer and have revised the manuscript as previously stated (Page 4 Paragraph 2, Page 13 Paragraph 1, 2 and 3).

Comment 3:

“The authors modified their methods to provide a measure of workload for students; however, it remains unclear if the number of patients expected is reflective of 3rd year students, 4th year students or both. Please clarify the workload expectations for 3rd year versus 4th year students.”

The number of patients expected is reflective of both third and fourth year students. The Methods section was clarified regarding the workload expectations of students (Page 5, Paragraph 1).

Comment 4:

“In the final paragraph of the outcome measures, please change the primary outcome measure to the total score on the AW or AECOPD sections. As it stands currently, the language of ‘the score of the whole questionnaires’ suggest that both sections were combined”

The changes have been made as suggested (Page 8, Paragraph 2).

Comment 5:
“The last sentence in the eighth limitation is awkward. Revise for clarity: “it is possible that the intervention group scores would be lower if the proportion of fourth year students were equal between comparison groups.”

The changes have been made as suggested (Page16, Paragraph 3).

Comment 6:
For readability, begin a new paragraph with each limitation.”

The changes have been made throughout the manuscripts as suggested (Pages 14, 15 and 16).