Reviewer's report

Title: Self-assessment versus work-place assessments of competence: four cohorts of medical graduates and perceptions of 'old' versus 'new' curriculum.

Version: 1 Date: 5 March 2014

Reviewer: Simon Watmough

Reviewer's report:

I feel that this is interesting paper - although it is about a topic much published recently within the literature it does add to the literature around this and does have a slightly different take on this by coming at the topic from 2 different angles. As such, I do think it does deserve to be published but I do think it could benefit from some amendments which I suppose should be classed as minor essential revisions.

I am not sure the title is easy to follow and could be modified.

The abstract is good.

I would like to know more about the differences between the curricula - I think 2 diagrams would help with this or references where we could find that information out. There is nothing for example about how students from either course learn clinical or communication skills.

I'd prefer the title "Introduction" at the start, but that is personal choice. At the end of the introduction/background before starting on methods there should be a clear aim about what the research question the paper is going to address and how.

In the methods it is not entirely clear about the period of contact and follow up.

I think there should be more about the intern form, I know it is covered in the background to some extent, but it should be made clear if it is "high stakes", and the process when the interns are graded by senior clinicians.

In analysis, I think the Bonferroni method needs a reference.

In the first paragraph of the discussion the paper talks about communication skills and yet we don't know how communication skills are taught in either curriculum.

On page 10, saying Jones et al found in a PBL course rather than a "new" course would be more helpful, not all new courses are PBL.

At the top of page 11 you say that Goldacre et al have shown preparedness has increased, but you need to say how your study ties in with this and I think overall you need to be more explicit about the impact your new curriculum has had.

For strengths and weaknesses the authors could stress more the triangulation aspect of the work which makes it different to many of these kinds of studies. The further research is good but could also suggest looking at the impact of
perception of skills a few years after graduation which some studies have already done.
In the conclusion, it says very boldly "individuals who would succeed under either curriculum" Is this correct and can it be corroborated?
Figure one isn't very clear.

**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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
'I declare that I have no competing interests'