Reviewer's report

Title: Have "new" methods in medical education reached German-speaking Central Europe? A survey.

Version: 1 Date: 14 July 2014

Reviewer: Elizabeth H Lazzara

Reviewer's report:

Although I appreciate the author's response to address some of the suggested revisions, I do not believe that all of the revisions have been answered adequately. This version of the manuscript is an improvement. However, I still believe that there are major flaws within the manuscript. As currently written, I believe that there are three areas that still need significant improvement.

1. The psychometric properties of the metrics still remain in question. The authors mention that the first part of the survey is from another publication; however, they still do not indicate the psychometric properties of that metric for their present sample (e.g., reliability or validity). Was the reliability coefficient the same, better, or worse for their sample as it was in Segarra et al. 2008 sample? Did the metric need to be altered to improve reliability? The authors do reference that face validity was established by a team of experts; however, face validity is one type of validity. That actually raises some additional questions - how was face validity established? What constitutes a sufficient level of face validity? It seems as though that process was rather subjective, and the details of that progress remain elusive. Additionally, it could be argued that a more important validity to determine is construct validity. In sum, without knowing whether the metrics were valid or even reliable, it is near impossible to ascertain if what the authors intended to assess was actually assessed and assessed consistently. That, in my opinion, is a significant issue especially given that is survey-based.

2. The limitation section would substantially benefit from greater detail. The authors have added that a limitation is the response rate of 93%. I actually commend the authors for obtaining a response rate of 93%; that is impressive. On the other hand, there are limitations of this study that were not mentioned. First, surveys, regardless of what the content or questions, are always subject to responder bias. That is always a limitation inherent in survey research but should still be acknowledged. Another limitation actually relates to the issues I raised previously - the limitation of lack of established psychometric properties. With some more thinking, there are likely other limitations that should be represented as well.

3. Finally, the implications and future directions of the study do not seem adequately represented. The authors present a picture of the state of simulation within German-Speaking Central Europe, but the manuscript would benefit by going one step beyond simply stating the status quo. What are the future
directions of the field based upon these results? What gaps within simulation and centers remain and need to be addressed? Why should these be addressed? What are recommendations for practitioners and researchers based upon these results? What is the rationale for such recommendations? Again, taking the field and the science another step beyond the current state is necessary.