Reviewer's report

Title: Voluntary undergraduate technical skills training course to prepare students for clerkship assignment: tutees' acceptance and tutors' training and attitudes

Version: 1 Date: 26 January 2014

Reviewer: Valdes Bollela

Reviewer's report:

Dear Editor,

Thanks for the opportunity to review this work.

This is a very interesting approach to study a topic that has been increasing in every medical school around the world, even those which don't have high-tech lab skills. Most of the schools has been given more importance to the training of their students pre and during the clerkships.

There are many papers published regarding PAL and skills training for students before they start their clinical rotations. The new aspect in this paper is the idea of having students being tutors to their colleagues. This is not a new concept, but publications that focus this approach with volunteers (tutors and students) to help each other in pre-clerkship training is less common and deserves to be published.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   Yes

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   YES

3. Are the data sound?
   Yes

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   Yes

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   No.

The authors made a very good discussion. I'd like only to suggest they consider to not include Table 4. Despite BMC MedEd is a online publication, with that
table, the article become too long. I suggest they would include that as a appendix. In the results we can have a good idea about the main topics (themes) that came up from the qualitative analysis.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
Nothing to comment in this topic.

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

9. Is the writing acceptable?
Yes

Some final thoughts about this very interesting and well written article:
Just a curiosity:
We saw that 9/10 tutors were female, and they also had more female than male students among volunteers for the training.
I’d like to know what is the proportion (male/female) per year in the medical school?
Is it the same (more female than male)? Or it is different in the whole school than we saw in the study?
In my country, the percentage of female use to be no more than 40% of total medical students. And women use to be more engaged in this kind of activity (volunteers).
Depending on the situation we could make some inferences about what this could mean.

Conclusion:

• Minor Revisions:
1. No, only consider change the table 4 to the appendix.

Sincerely,

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Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'