Reviewer's report

Title: Using a Formative Simulated Patient Exercise for Curriculum Evaluation

Version: 1 Date: 18 February 2004

Reviewer: Amy V Blue

Reviewer's report:

General
This is an innovative pilot study that examines students' retention of clinical skills, specifically, participatory decision making skills, following a targeted educational intervention. The authors were able to use a pseudo-randomized design. The methods and results are clearly written and study limitations and implications are addressed.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

It would be helpful for the reader not familiar with participatory decision making to include a sentence or two that describes the uniqueness of this approach by physicians when communicating with patients. In the Methods section, Intervention subsection, it would be helpful to refer back to the Keefe work to clarify for the reader that it is what the authors are referring to in their description of the intervention. For example, "As described by Keefe et al, students are trained to use a variation of a model...."

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
None