Reviewer's report

Title: Assessment of knowledge retention and the value of proctored ultrasound exams after an introductory emergency ultrasound curriculum.

Version: 1 Date: 3 July 2007

Reviewer: Alan B Chater

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?

The study considers two important questions - does a structured didactic and hands on program improve interpretive accuracy at 6 months and do proctored ultrasound examinations add to this. These are well framed and defined.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?

Generally yes although the reported increase in "comfort with the ultrasound machine and increased frequency of use" remains somewhat vague and unsubstantiated.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?

The data doesn't consider prior experience (except for differentiating between interns and faculty), subsequent ER exposure to ultrasound and potential bias introduced by the trial not being blinded. Despite this and the issue noted in 2. above, the study does address the issues it sets out to address.

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

Yes - well organised and rigorous.

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

Yes - well summarised and conclusions well drawn. The suggestions for further investigation are well scoped.

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

Yes.

7. Is the writing acceptable?

Well written.
Please make your review as constructive and detailed as possible in your comments so that authors have the opportunity to overcome any serious deficiencies that you find and please also divide your comments into the following categories:

- Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

The above issues should be considered but are discretionary except for change as outlined below.

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

Nil

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

reported increase in "comfort with the ultrasound machine and increased frequency of use" should be further substantiated.

Once you have done this, there are also some questions for you to answer, including one that asks your advice on publication. Please remember that since we have no space constraints, we will publish all work deemed by peer review to be coherent and scientifically sound, providing it does not substantially duplicate work that the authors have published elsewhere or is such a trivial study that it does not deserve publication at all at this stage. Further guidance on these points follows.

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Reviewers should also let the journal know if they believe that research has been falsified or manipulated,

No

or if there are issues with the authorship or contributions towards the manuscript, such as the unacknowledged involvement of a medical writer.

No