Reviewer’s report

Title: A clinically integrated Curriculum in Evidence-based Medicine for just-in-time learning through on-the-job training: The EU-EBM project.

Version: 2 Date: 12 July 2007

Reviewer: Fredric M Wolf

Reviewer’s report:

General

This report describes the early development of the ongoing European Union’s project to develop “A clinically integrated Curriculum in Evidence-based Medicine for just-in-time learning through on-the-job training.” This should be of great interest to readers from the perspective of both its pedagogical approach and its cross-national/cultural application.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

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

1. In its current form, this report outlines in a very general way the purpose of the project, but provides insufficient detail regarding the innovative aspects of the curriculum, namely the learning/teaching methods that are referenced in Table 1, but are not described in any detail in the text. This seems to me the heart of the paper, as noted in the title, abstract, and introduction, and, in my opinion, ought to be the focus of the report. I believe that this would be of extreme interest to readers. The information that is provided in more detail, e.g., the learning objectives, the 5 modules/curricular content, and the assessment plan are similar to what is currently being done in many settings and is not particularly new or innovative.

2. The section “Organization of the content and teaching methods” (p.9) needs considerable amplification. Providing some examples would be very useful. What does the e-learning platform and module look like? What are some of the “minor activities where learners perform practical tasks”? What are examples of some of the assignments handed in to facilitators? Please add specific examples.

3. The authors state “The educational strategy is summarized in figure 2.” (p. 10). This figure references the SPICES model, but no detail of this is provided in the text. Examples of how the EU program implements elements of this model would be very informative.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1. The authors state “An improvement on each of these four domains can best be achieved . . .” (pp. 5-6) but mention only three: skills, attitudes, and behaviour (p. 5). Do you mean to include “knowledge” as the fourth?

2. It is stated that the results of the needs assessment survey will be reported elsewhere (p. 7), but it would be helpful to provide a brief overview of the main findings while presenting details elsewhere.

3. I believe the Slawson and Shaughnessy paper was published in 2005, not 2006 as listed (reference 12).

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. “The curriculum assessment concerns evaluation of participants’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 10). Is there a plan to measure behaviour change? If not, this could be referenced as a future need in the discussion section.

2. Very minor grammatical suggestions:

   It may be more appropriate to say “is DESIGNED to” rather than “is ABLE to provide just-in-time learning” (Abstract) since this has not yet been shown, or if it has, is not presented in this report nor referenced elsewhere.

   I might say, “The goal of the curriculum IS [rather than WAS] to develop . . .” (p. 6) since this goal is ongoing, right?

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests