Author's response to reviews

Title: Evaluation of a web-based ECG-interpretation programme for undergraduate medical students

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear BioMed Central Editorial Team!

Thank you for your comments regarding our revised manuscript. We are pleased by your view that the manuscript would be acceptable for publication if we agree to modify it by describing all the limitations of the study, among which the lack of the pre-test is the most relevant of all. We have now revised according to this request. You will find our comments (in black) and changes according to the respective reviewer's report below and in the attached manuscript.

With kind regards
Mikael Nilsson

Reviewer: Arnold Hill
Reviewer's report:
I am satisfied that the authors have addressed the previously recommended revisions.
In the last sentence of the background section of the abstract, 'get more effective' should be changed to 'become more effective'.

The sentence changed to: “Furthermore, the quality of education may increase and become more effective through a superior educational approach, improved visualization and interactivity.”

Reviewer: Paul Bradley
Reviewer's report:
Thank you for asking me to re-review this paper. The authors have made significant changes that make the paper better to read. However, the paper still has the fundamental flaws of a lack of pre-intervention testing and significant volunteer bias. These seriously weaken the impact of this paper. The authors rightly point out that better studies are needed and would be better to present their findings from their planned future research.

The weaknesses is now described in the manuscript both in the discussion (7th sentence)

“However a limitation with this study is that some of the students did not perform the voluntary diagnostic test and that a pre-test was not performed. There is also a possibility of a volunteer bias in these kind of studies, a fact that is always existing when there are few opportunities to make the test compulsory before a new educational tool is tested. Additional studies are thus needed to assess the possible advantages with web-based ECG-learning and if it can replace conventional learning”

and we have now also further stressed this in the last conclusion sentences:

“In conclusion, the described ECG training system seems to have a good potential to facilitate ECG learning both in individual self-learning and to improve the effectiveness of teacher-controlled tuition. Due to the lack of pre-intervention testing and possible volunteer bias in our study more research need to be performed to fully understand the “if’s, where’s and how’s” of using computer based ECG training. However this interactive ECG interpretation system together with a learning management system might be a suitable model to be used to further study this subject”