Reviewer's report

**Title:** Harmonising Evidence-Based Medicine teaching: a study of the outcomes of E-learning in five European countries

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 14 February 2008

**Reviewer:** Allen Shaughnessy

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions: None

Minor essential revisions:
I have three issues that should be addressed in the strengths and weaknesses section:

1) The setting for this study is highly structured and not at all typical of the setting in which the educational intervention will be used in practice. Future users are not likely to complete all modules at one time in a supervised, group session, in which they know their performance will be measured. Given a likely reactive effect due to experimental design (Hawthorne effect), results of this intervention in practice will likely be different.

2) The outcome of this study was knowledge, not behaviors. We have no idea whether the increased knowledge translates into meaningful clinical practice change. While not the focus of your study, this limitation should be mentioned.

3) The continuing medical education literature (see reviews by Dave Davis) has many examples of how immediate post-testing results are not maintained over even a short period of time. This limitation also should be pointed out in meanings of our findings section.

Discretionary revisions

The authors may wish to indicate, in some way on Figure 3a, the highest possible score for each module. The bar graphs for each module are presented on the same graph, inviting readers to compare changes not only within modules but between modules. Since, I think, the unit of change for each module is an integer (i.e., one could get a score of 5 or 8 or 10, but not 5.2, 8.6, or 10.8), a change in score will have different meaning based on the total possible score. In other words, a change from a score of 6 to a score of 7 is not the same as a change from 12 to 13.

**Which journal?:** Not appropriate for BMC Medicine: an article whose findings are important to those with closely related interests and more suited to BMC Medical Education

**What next?:** Offer publication in BMC Medical Education after minor essential
revisions

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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.