Reviewer's report

Title: Pharmacology as a foreign language: A preliminary evaluation of podcasting as a supplementary learning tool for non-medical prescribing students

Version: 1 Date: 3 September 2009

Reviewer: Ed Peile

Reviewer's report:

A well conducted study which is clearly written and illustrates the potential of podcasting in this area. I was a little disappointed not to see more exploration of the ‘foreign language’ aspects of pharmacology learning, in terms of relating podcast usage to increased familiarity with terminology and concepts. The advantages and disadvantages of podcasts are fairly reviewed in relation to the relevant literature.

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- Major Compulsory Revisions
none

- Minor Essential Revisions
none

- Discretionary Revisions
P4 Comparisons between academic background of pharmacists and nurses on NMP courses could be placed in context by understanding of prescribing in relation to both disciplines (ie what do pharmacists need by way of additional learning to enable them to prescribe and what do nurses need?) The paradox is that those with most need for additional scientific knowledge and understanding have the lowest average levels of prior education in these areas.

You report tracking of use only by ‘at least once’. Frequency might indicate the difference between those who genuinely worked with the tool and those who were curious to try it.

What next?

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Based on your assessment of the validity of the manuscript, what do you advise should be the next step?

- Accept without revision
- Accept after discretionary revisions (which the authors can choose to ignore)
Level of interest

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BMC Medical Education has a policy of publishing all scientifically sound research whatever its level of interest. However, if you choose one of the first three categories below, we may ask the authors if they would like the manuscript considered instead for the more selective journal BMC Medicine.

- An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English
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- Acceptable

Statistical review
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Is it essential that this manuscript be seen by an expert statistician?
- No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests
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'I declare that I have no competing interests'