Reviewer’s report

Title: The incorporation of focused history in Checklist for Early Recognition and Treatment of Acute Illness and Injury

Version: 0 Date: 14 May 2016

Reviewer: Lori Shutter

Reviewer's report:

Checklists in the acute care setting have been shown to improve patient care, but the process to use checklists often faces challenges. The authors assessed the timing for implementation of a tool that facilitates the evaluation of critically ill patients. Subjects were randomly assigned to assess a patient in a simulation scenario by starting with either obtaining a focused history choreographed in series (after) or in parallel to the primary survey. The primary outcome was the cognitive burden assessed associated with the task, and the secondary outcome was time to completion of the focused history.

This is an interesting study that looks at the process of care rather than actual interventions. This has clinical relevance due to the increasing focus on quality improvement in the current healthcare environment.

Some additional information that would strengthen this article includes:

1) Details on the subjects in regards to their duration of practice, prior experience with simulation training, background training.

2) While the authors refer to the 'checklist for early recognition and treatment of acute illness and injury (CERTAIN)' tool in the title of the article, only elements of this tool were used. It is unclear how the tool was actually incorporated in the study, or how the elements used were selected. More details on how this tool was used in the actual test scenario would have been beneficial.

3) No information is provided regarding what instructions were given to the participants prior to start of the simulation.
4) How was the simulation timed?

5) How were prompts provided? At the beginning of the scenario? At key points during the scenario?

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I recommend additional statistical review

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:
1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal