Reviewer’s report

Title: Digital Rectal Examination Skills: Motives, Attitudes, and First Training Experiences of Standardized Patients

Version: 2 Date: 24 October 2014

Reviewer: Florian Pilz

Reviewer’s report:

1. Minor essential revision
In the study design (lines 112f) I missed details on the SPs and the program. All SPs are experienced (table 2) but I wonder whether it is a new program and you recruited SPs from your “stock”. That became clear in line 332 and in line 441. In line 441 you wrote that you were able “to include all of our SPs who are part of the DRE program”. So I think you created a new program and recruited some of your existing SPs. This information is missing in the study design. Maybe you can clear this up.

2. Minor essential revision
Your title is “digital rectal examination skills: motives, attitudes, and first training experiences of standardized patients”. What I would expect is an answer to the questions “Why do your SPs participate in a DRE program?”, “What are their attitudes towards the program/ the DRE?”, “What are their experiences with your training?”. Also your aim is to “explore SPs’ attitudes towards participation in a DRE teaching program” (line 49). In contrast the result section is too much on the training: themes D, E, F, G, H. Themes A and B also have their focus on the training not really on DRE or a DRE program. The in my opinion the title is misleading and should be changed. Alternatively the focus of the result section can be changed.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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