Reviewer's report

Title: Impact of an individual education induction meeting on academic performance in undergraduate Obstetrics and Gynaecology: a cluster randomised controlled trial

Version: Date: 27 November 2014

Reviewer: Are Holen

Reviewer's report:

This paper looks at the impact of one single individual induction meeting of about half an hour’s duration with every medical student at the beginning of the G&O term; the aim is to assess this intervention in relation to the students’ academic performance, attendance and learning experience. This is done in a comparative design with an adequate number of participants; half a class was given the intervention while the other half was not. Eventually, the outcomes of the two groups were compared. No difference was found regarding the academic performance, and a minor difference was found regarding clinical and tutorial-based attendance.

1. LENGTH: The paper is too long and wordy in relation to its’ content and findings; I would like to see close to 40% reduction in the length.

2. TITLE: The title is not reflecting the topics which are given the most attention in the Results and Discussion.

3. AIMS: The aims of the study are poorly stated.

4. OPERATIONALIZATION: The concept “learning experience” is supposed to show a significant difference, but I find it hard to detect what are the underpinnings for this claim. Apart from one question in the students’ response survey, I do not find how the concept of the students’ “learning experience” has been operationalized in ways that qualifies the conclusions drawn.

5. UNEXPLAINED CENTRAL CONCEPTS: Several times, the concept students’ “learning plans” are brought in, and also, the creation of specific learning objectives as well as the optimizing and broadening of the students’ learning strategies are mentioned. However, these concepts are not given any further meaning and they are not put into perspective in the paper.

6. TOO MANY CONCEPTS: Several other central concepts are poorly defined and outlined. Many labels are used without further explanation or clarification regarding how they may differ or overlap: Clinical attachment, educational supervision, regular supervision, mentoring, early educational direction, group induction (lectures) vs. the individual one-to-one education induction meeting. Limited uses both of designations or labels as well as a limitation of concepts are strongly advised.

7. RESULTS & DISCUSSION: Based on the above, I have doubts about the validity of the reported findings.
Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.