Reviewer's report

Title: Teaching surgical clerks: an analysis of sustaining knowledge for future non-surgeons

Version: 2 Date: 2 December 2014

Reviewer: Andrew Hill

Reviewer's report:

Thankyou for the opportunity to review this paper.
The paper starts with the assertion, based on an obscure report from an obscure journal, that surgical teaching is poor. This stands in stark contrast to other reports and personal experience that students tend to love their surgical rotations for the reasons that you identify later.

You then move to a study where you ask a group of doctors, not surgeons, what the they remember from their surgical rotations. You gain a number of insights, none of which are new or particularly surprising.

The connection between the study and the introduction is completely unclear to me. And certainly there is no clear connection between the introduction and the study.

The discussion fails to bring the paper together.

Finally you have failed to mention the rather selective group of doctors that you interviewed. To avoid any form of surgical rotation since graduation in most jurisdictions identifies a rather extreme sort of doctor-one who avoids surgical rotations at all cost-this is hardly a fair way to assess how well medical students are taught surgery.

I would have expected that some sort of retention of knowledge study might have been done with something like the study you have performed being used to provide some sort of explanatory data.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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