Author’s response to reviews

Title: ARCADO - Adding random case analysis to direct observation in workplace-based formative assessment of general practice registrars

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We thank the reviewers for their time and suggestions and trust our responses are satisfactory to enable publication.

Reviewer 1 has suggested that we more clearly distinguish findings that are new. You have noted that although the use of random case analysis combined with direct observation has not been reported before, and our manuscript describe the benefits and trade-offs of this new combined formative assessment, many of our other findings relating to DO and RCA have been reported before.

We accept that the reader will be interested in novel findings within the individual assessment components. We have now described the findings about RCA and DO that are novel more explicitly in the second paragraph of the discussion. We have elected not to separate reporting of results by whether they were due to RCA, DO or the combination (ARCADO). Primarily, we were concerned about the impact of such a change on the readability of the manuscript.
Reviewer 2 raised concerns about the sample and potential for bias. We have made changes to the abstract and the manuscript to address these concerns, in particular, not describing the sample as ‘purposive’. This description of the sample was only in the abstract and was not used in the original manuscript. We have removed this description from the abstract.

In the manuscript we have chosen to describe the sampling process more fully rather than electing to call the sampling process either ‘purposive’ or ‘convenient’. The educators were chosen purposefully in that we elected to use medical educators rather than supervisors to conduct the assessment as they were likely to be more skilled assessors and reporters and we elected to exclude some educators for the reasons outlined in the manuscript. However other reasons for selection were more related to convenience. We have clarified that the medical educators who attended the two-hour training session required for eligibility were attending a two-day professional development workshop and had not specifically elected to attend the ARCADO training on its own. We have also expanded the paragraph in the discussion regarding limitations that apply to the findings given our sampling.

We again thank the reviewers for their recommendations and hope we have answered their concerns.