Reviewer’s report

Title: Assessment of a course of realistic surgical training during medical education as a tool for pre-residential surgical training

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Reviewer: Geney Gunston

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The clarity of the language in the article should be enhanced.

For example,

1. I suggest that the title be changed to "Assessment of a course of realistic surgical training DURING medical education as a tool for pre-residential surgical training".

2. p3, lines 54-59: This sentence is long and the language used is unclear. "The system is constructed in a way, that offers points of contact with the surgical department for medical students at all times, thereby not only improving manual training but also closely gearing towards the acquisition of well prepared, new talents as residents for surgical fields."

3. Example of grammatical error: p4, 43-48: In this study we evaluate the value of this course as a tool for surgical education and as a way of enhancing interest in surgical fields and influencing medical students in subsequently choosing a surgical career.

For the method and control, which impact on the conclusions drawn:

1. The questionnaires used should be included for review: p6, 61 to p7 1-4: A scale from 1 to 6 was used for the rating, where 1 stands for "no agreement at all" with the statement at hand and 6 stands for "complete agreement". In addition, the students graded the whole course using standard German grading system, where 1 equals "very good" and 6 "insufficient".

2. The methodology would be strengthened by inclusion of tutor assessment of students' skills (as per reference #9), especially for the "effectiveness in teaching practical abilities ...pre- and post-instructional for skills such as performing a surgical knot, performing a singleknot or intracutaneous suture, identifying anatomical structures" p7, 15-20.
3. There is no statement re Ethical approval for the study, including the use of fresh cadavers and student data.

4. Data from controls in semesters 7 and 8 who did not complete the "Feel like a surgeon" course may be useful in assessing whether the results described are due to the course alone or due, in part, to the impact of other clinical and/or practical experience gained by all students in semesters 7 and 8. This comparison would strengthen the conclusions drawn regarding the impact of the course.

**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.

No

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

No

**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 am able to assess the statistics

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

Needs some language corrections before being published

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