Reviewer's report

Title: Adaptive coordination in surgical teams: an interview study

Version: 1 Date: 12 August 2014

Reviewer: Lene Spanager

Reviewer's report:

Minor essential revisions:

1. Overall, I believe that the paper about adaptive coordination in surgical teams adds to our understanding of teamwork during surgery as perceived by surgeons and nurses; and it provides rich data. The authors state that the paper complements research on non-technical skills and I agree. However, as the results (expressed in the categories and subcategories) show, there is considerable overlap with the non-technical skills taxonomies (e.g. NOTSS, SPLINTS, OTAS etc). So I believe that the manuscript would benefit from a more extended discussion on how this paper adds to the existing literature and why/whether there is a need for a structured observation system specific to coordination processes in surgical teams as the authors suggest in the conclusion.

2. Methods section: I would like to hear how participants were recruited and whether interviews were individual or in groups.

3. Methods section: How did you decide that saturation was achieved?

4. Results section: You have stated that the coding system was developed both deductively using an existing coding system and deductively, allowing new codes to emerge. It makes me curious to hear: did new codes emerge? The discussion suggests that the aspect of 'climate' was a new result, but it is not entirely clear to me.

5. Results section: Table 2 provides 2 main theme groups, 6 categories and 18 subcategories. However, I am wondering why only 4 of the subcategories of the 'task management' category is described in the text, whereas all the other subcategories are mentioned.

6. Discussion section: I am curious how your findings of adaptive coordination in surgical teams differ or are similar to the adaptive coordination in the anesthesia subteam. Can you comment on that?

Discretionary revisions:

1. Table 2 provides an overview of the coding system. At the same time it provides quotations underpinning each category and subcategory. The results section also gives many citations for each subcategory. If space is an issue, then perhaps some citations in the results section or the table could be left out.

2. For me it is unusual to see references in the results section (as long as there is also a 'discussion' section which this manuscript contains). Are they necessary?
**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 have no competing interests to declare