

Reviewer's report

Title: Addressing gaps in surgical skills training: experience piloting a surgical skills curriculum using low cost simulation at the Muhimbili University, Tanzania

Version: 1 **Date:** 6 February 2009

Reviewer: Stanley J. Hamstra

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

(1) Please describe whether the faculty raters on the OSCE were blinded to whether the students were at the "pre-course" stage or at the "post-course" stage. If not blinded, please provide argument comparing the influence of the 2-day course on performance improvements vs. rater bias, expectation, or other factors, such as attention from being observed twice, or simply the effect of repeated testing. i.e. why do you think the improvement in scores is due to the 2-day course, and not other reasonable alternative explanations?

(2) Please describe why you did not use a comparison group.

(3) For Tables 4-5, please provide results of statistical analysis, e.g. matched pairs t-test.

(4) For Tables 4-5, please provide measures of effect size.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare I have no competing interests.