Author's response to reviews

Title: Automated inter-rater reliability assessment and electronic data collection in a multi-center breast cancer study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Editor  
BMC Medical Research Methodology  

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Dear Editor,

We are re-submitting our revised manuscript titled, “Automated Inter-rater Reliability Assessment and Electronic Data Collection in a Multi-center Breast Cancer Study,” for publication in your Medical Research Methodology online journal. We appreciate the thorough review by the reviewers and have carefully considered the comments. We provide below the responses to their additional concerns.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Soe Soe Thwin

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REVIEWER 1 (Ronald Lagoe)

COMMENT#1

The first revision concerns Comment 1. The authors indicated that the issue of control and intervention strategies was addressed in the second paragraph of the Results section. I did not see the wording concerning control and intervention strategies in this paragraph. The authors’ language needs to appear in this section.

Response
We apologize again for the confusion. As stated in the previous response, there were no control or intervention strategies in this study and we did not compare paper based versus electronic data abstraction. Rather, all data for each subject were collected from a combination of electronic sources and medical record review, all entered into an electronic data collection system. The second paragraph of the Result section describes the variability in electronically available data across six sites. The intention of this manuscript was to report efficiencies gained from implementing an electronic data collection (EDC) system instead of the originally proposed paper-based data collection.

COMMENT#2

With respect to Comment 2, the authors have added a sentence concerning the estimated savings produced by the project. I believe that this subject deserves more than a single sentence. I suggest that the authors translate their methodology in calculating the savings into a single paragraph and add it to the Results section.

Response
We have expanded the last paragraph in the Results section with detailed information on dollar savings calculated as follows: 25% of budgeted project manager time for four months at each of our six sites; four months of budgeted medical record abstractor time at each of our six sites; and 50% data analyst time for four months.
REVIEWER 2 (Elizabeth Staton)

1. Please spell out “percent agreement” instead of using “% agreement” in text.

Response
We have spelled out “%agreement” as “percent agreement”

2. Second paragraph, page 6: “whereas” is one word

Response
We have made the correction for “whereas” to read as one word.


Response
We have added the word ‘paper’ as suggested.

4. Since your research sites were within the U.S., consider adopting the American usage of quotation marks: double quotation marks around “front end” and “back end” instead of single quotation marks. See p. 220 of 9th edition AMA Manual of Style (section 6.6.7) or http://www.writersblock.ca/tips/monthtip/tipapr99.htm for explanation of difference.

Response
We have replaced single quotation marks with double quotation marks.

5. Consider not using the abbreviation “BMC” (Boston Medical Center) in the text, given that this will be published in a BMC (Biomed Central) journal.

Response
We have adjusted the text to spell out Boston Medical Center instead of using the abbreviations BMC.