Author's response to reviews

Title: Enhancing GPs' commitment in a hospital-based study. Rationale, design and participation rates in the Diagest 3 GP motivational study.

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Cover letter

When patients are enrolled in a hospital led study they tend to disappear when they turn home, not answering to clinics invitations. Rates of dropouts are often high. This is what happened to the Diagest 3 trial. The steering committee decided to contact patients’ GPs, which wasn’t foreseen in the initial protocol, to help motivate them. The response rate of GPs was below 10% and GPs didn’t get involved. This study, the Diagest 3 GP motivation study, aimed to understand this phenomenon, to quantify it and to measure the impact on the overall participation rate in the main study. The motivational study increased the overall participation rate by 20.5%.

This paper describes the mixed method that was used. Methods to explain GPs’ feelings towards hospital research, methods and motivational techniques to enhance response rates, methods to analyze how GPs could provide 17% of the main study final data. It should be of interest for any institutional researcher that has to carry out a research where participation of patients’ GPs is planned.

Two other papers are scheduled to complete this article: one describing the initial qualitative study, and the second one describing the survey based on the results of the qualitative study. We chose to submit this paper at first, as it can be immediately implemented.