Author's response to reviews

Title: Family physician views about primary care reform in Ontario: a postal questionnaire

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Responses to Reviewers Comments (VERSION 2 - 22 January 2004)
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Please convey our thanks to these reviewers for their helpful suggestions.

1) Response to Reviewer J.Michael Paterson
We have included 2 additional sentences to address the issue of sampling bias in the paragraph 2 of the discussion.

"This sampling frame excluded general practitioners who are not certified in Family Medicine, but who are eligible to participate in the reforms. These physicians are likely to be older than certified family physicians and may hold different views from those sampled in this study. The extent that this exclusion may bias these results is unknown, although that it may be minimal is suggested by the finding that non-certified general practitioners were equally likely to join a pilot primary care reform site as those who were members of the Ontario College of Family Physicians [10]."

2) Response to Reviewer Brian Hutchison
2.1 We agree with the reviewer that our inconsistent use of the agree categories is confusing. Accordingly we have rewritten the paragraph. We have consistently used the categories 'agreed and strongly agreed' and the related percentages have been modified accordingly.

"The level of agreement with statements about primary care reform is presented in Table 4. A substantial majority (72%) of physicians did not expect to join the Network by 2004 or by some later date after 2004 (60%). If the intermediate category, 'slightly disagree' was included, these estimates rose to 84% and 76% respectively. The proportion of persons who reported that they never expected to join the network was 82%. Thirty six percent of responders either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they did not understand the Network well enough to make an informed decision about it. Forty eight percent of responders agreed or strongly agreed that the current system for the organization of primary care delivery required change and many responders (60%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the financing of primary care requires change. Nevertheless, few responders agreed with the statement that capitation (10%) or rostering (23%) would improve primary care in Ontario. Many responding physicians (68%) believed that appropriate incentives would enhance prevention. Thirty percent of responders agreed or strongly agreed that patients should always have access to extended office hours, while 42% agreed or strongly agreed that patients should have access to a telephone health line. Half the responders (51.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to see computer systems replace papers systems in their..."
practice."

2.2 We agree with the reviewer and modified the second sentence in the discussion to read

"While many physicians recognize the need for change in both the organization and financing of primary care, the majority of physicians do not expect to join the Network, and half of them do not understand the Network enough to make an informed decision about participating