Reviewer's report

Title: German ambulatory care physicians' perspectives on evidence based medicine - a national survey

Version: 1 Date: 8 March 2006

Reviewer: Paul Glasziou

Reviewer's report:

General
This appears to be an interesting survey of 500 German clinicians about their attitudes to guidelines (and also partly about their attitudes to EBM). Particularly interesting is the finding about the degree of trust varying by who developments the guidelines. I think the article is useful but there are some clarifications needed in the methods and presentation.

*****************************************************

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. The title is inappropriate and should be "German ambulatory care physicians' perspectives on guidelines – a national survey". Most of the article is about guidelines and not about evidence-based medicine. Evidence-based medicine is about clinicians being informed by evidence to aid clinical decisions e.g., the hierarchy of evidence goes from systematic reviews to case-control studies but does not even mention guidelines (see [1] for a discussion of this issue and myths about EBM) This confusion of EBM with guidelines permeates most of the writing.
2. The sampling methods are not described. What was the sample frame (that is the list of doctors from which the 500 were chosen?) How were they selected from the sample frame? What was the response rate?

*****************************************************

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
3. The presentation of the graphs could be clearer as the undecided and disagree hatching are very similar.
4. Please give only 2 figures for most values e.g., Chi2 3.78 and p=0.477 should be 3.4 and 0.48 respectively.
5. Figures 6 & 7 the x-axis legend does not line up properly with the data and makes reading hard.

*****************************************************

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)


What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests