Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 26 March 2006

Reviewer: Ilkka Kunnamo

Reviewer's report:

General

The manuscript adds to the knowledge about attitude barriers of implementing evidence-based medicine. The study is a practical substudy of a national survey on health professionals and tackles a topical question. As the authors state in their discussion, the results of their telephone survey are exploratory and hypothesis-generating. Qualitative studies (e.g. focus group interviews) are needed to explore the reasons for the attitudes (including reimbursement issues and patient expectations) that may be specific to Germany.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Figure 5: The lines and bars are not easily comprehensible without more explanations. The vertical scale points are missing. Positions of the lines indicating means do not exactly match the numbers given in paragraph 2 on page 11. The meaning of the symbols (blocks and bars) should be explained in the figure legend. Is the line indicating the mean for primary care physicians in the right place in relation to the block?

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Pages 6 (line 2) and page 7 (line 10): There should be a more detailed explanation for the grouping of physicians into primary care physicians and specialists already on page 6.

Page 8, lines 7 - 9: The numbers given in the text could be presented in table 2 (and omitted from the text).

Page 8, paragraph 4: There is a discrepancy in the percentage of primary care physicians reported in the text (41.5%) and the combined percentage of the first 4 specialties in table 3 (51%). This discrepancy is explained on page 7, but it would be better to include this information in the table, e.g. by listing primary care physicians and specialists separately.

I suggest that the authors omit table 1 and include the complete items from table 1 in figures 1 – 4. This is because the short versions of the items in figures 1 – 4 are not always comprehensible as such, and the reader must alternate between table 1 and figures 1 – 4 when examining the figures.
Spelling and terminological issues:
- *ebm* -> EBM
- *Basic data* -> Baseline characteristics

**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 work as the editor-in-chief of EBM Guidelines, a guideline collection that is used in a number of countries, including Germany.