Reviewer's report

Title: Diffusion of an E-learning programme among Danish General Practitioners: A national-wide prospective survey

Version: 1 Date: 5 November 2007

Reviewer: Shaun Treweek

Reviewer's report:

General
As the authors state, the internet offers the possibility of using web-based systems to deliver CME and other training. The key word, of course, is ‘possibility’ and it is good to see that the authors are studying the actual uptake of their CME program. I don’t really have any major concerns about the paper, and those I have ought not to be hard to deal with. My specific comments are listed below under the headings used by Biomed Central.

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

Abstract
1. Page 4, Conclusion. Users can rate themselves as having a high diagnostic standard without actually being very good - this is self-report. I don’t think your conclusion can be as strong as saying ‘indicating a lack of users with a need for..’. There may be a very large need but self-report may not identify it. The authors should modify the abstract and expand the Discussion on Page 9 to address this point. Could the CME program have presented GPs with a diagnostic scenario so that their abilities could be tested rather than relying on self-report? If no, why not?

Methods
1. I did find it a bit odd that there is no description of what the actual CME program is, or requires of the GPs, beyond saying that it comprises slides with audio and some self-study elements. I think that the authors need to describe their CME program in more detail.

2. Page 6. The dissemination methods for the ELP were fairly passive (eg. mentioning the ELP in a separate section of the dementia guideline, mentioning it on the DMA website). Why were (only) these methods chosen? One could speculate that this was an important reason why so few GPs logged on - they simply didn’t know about ELP. The authors should add a few sentences to their Methods justifying their choices and then discuss the weaknesses (or strengths) of the approach in the Discussion.

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

Title
1. ‘national-wide’ should be one of ‘national’ or ‘nationwide’. Once the authors have decided which to use, they should correct the whole paper because ‘national-wide- pops up a few times.

Abstract
1. Page 3: I think the opening sentence should be reworded slightly to ‘We were unable to identify.’ The same sentence appears on Page 5, Introduction.

2. Page 3, Results. The 192 GPs are given as 5.3% here but appear as 5.2% on Page 8.

3. Page 3, Results. I wasn’t sure what was meant by ‘common interest’. Would ‘general interest be better’?

Methods

2. Page 7. Did the pop-up questionnaire 2 appear at every log-on? Do the authors think that this might get a bit irritating for GPs?

3. Page 7. I think the order of the Tables needs to be changed to the order in which they are mentioned. The current Tables 2 and 3 should be Tables 1 and 2. The current Table 1 isn’t mentioned until Page 8.

4. Page 7. ‘ASCHII’ should be ‘ASCII’, or better ‘as plain text’.

Results
1. Page 9. With regard to subsequent log-ins, would the authors expect a GP to log-on again after completing the ELP? And how much time passed between log-ins (days, weeks, months?)

Discussion
1. Page 9. Was the ELP designed to help a GP deal with a specific problem? The authors say that GPs did not have specific problems but it isn’t clear that the ELP could actually help in this regard.

2. Page 10. Was only one email sent to DSAM members?

Figure 1
This figure is not mentioned in the text; it either should be, or it should be dropped.

Tables
1. Table 1. The caption for this table should be ‘Characteristics of Danish GPs’
Only 192 GPs actually participated so the current caption is misleading.

2. Table 4. N=3632, not 2632. And why was the age cut-off 55 as opposed to, say, 50, or 60?

General
The quality of the English is very good but it would be good to go through the article again with a careful eye; there are a few typos here and there.

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

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests