Reviewer’s report

Title: Effectiveness of mobile-phone short message service (SMS) reminders for ophthalmology outpatient appointments: observational study

Version: 1 Date: 2 April 2008

Reviewer: Helen Baker

Reviewer’s report:

Comments to the author

The authors report a study to assess the effectiveness of SMS-based reminders for hospital outpatient appointments as a method of reducing non-attendance.

This is an interesting topic but I feel the methodology employed limits the value of the results. I have some concerns about the reporting of the study as it stands.

Major Revisions

1. The methods of the study are not clearly stated, this is an observational comparison. The control group are incorrectly named historical.

2. The study design is subject to substantial potential unquantifiable bias. For example those in the reminder group may be more/differently responsive because they have given their mobile number. This is mentioned in the limitations but could have been reduced by using a different study method. No attempt is mentioned to quantify such potential bias.

3. The results in the study are very brief. In the methods it is stated a chi-squared test was performed. I am not a statistician but feel the results would benefit from a review of a qualified statistician or at the very least a simple chi squared test.

4. Although it is stated that this is a pilot study the work does not really make a scientific paper. It is however an interesting topic and gives an indication for a larger study. It would maybe make an interesting letter that would stimulate work in the area.

Comments

5. Because the results are so brief the paper does feel unbalanced and the paper is mainly discussion. However the strengths and limitations are comprehensive

6. The abstract does convey what is reported in the paper and the authors do make recommendations for future work.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable
**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.