Reviewer's report

Title: Monitoring Health Related Quality of Life in paediatric practice: an innovative web-based application

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Reviewer: Galina Velikova

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Monitoring Health Related Quality of Life in Paediatric Practice: an Innovative Web-based Application

General Comments

This manuscript provides detail of a web-based application that allows child patients and parent carers to report health-related quality of life data prior to clinic visits. The manuscript provides detail of the design and use of the web-based application and provides some data on patient/parent and paediatrician satisfaction with the system.

Much of the manuscript is devoted to describing the web-based application, and this is presented in clear detail. Due to the detailed description of the general system the focus of the manuscript is somewhat lost. It is appreciated that the authors wish to present detail of the new system, but they also aim to present preliminary system-user satisfaction data. As such, the aims described in the background are not specific to the results that are presented. The methods described are not specific to the methods used to collect the data that are reported. The only data to be reported is the satisfaction of patients and paediatricians who used the application, however, very little data is presented, and what is presented is lacking any detail.

The general topic of the manuscript is interesting and timely. I believe that details of the system will be of interest to a wide audience and that it is important that the acceptability of the system to children, patients, and paediatricians is reported and evaluated. In its current state, the manuscript fails to make a clear statement. The aim of the manuscript is not clear, and the methods and results of the study are confused. As such, I would recommend that the balance of the manuscript is rectified to ensure that the presentation and discussion of the results of patient/parent and physician satisfaction with the system are the main focus of the manuscript. To this end, I have provided detailed point-by-point comments below. Comments that are deemed to be Major Compulsory Revisions are grouped first, followed by those which are Minor Essential Revisions and Discretionary Revisions.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

Background
1. Generally the background is clear and informative. This section, however, needs to incorporate much of the information that is currently presented in the methods section. As such, the information that is currently presented could potentially be reduced in length.

2. The aims stated at the end of the background are not specific to the results that are presented in the current paper. The aims need to be clarified and made specific to the outcome of the current study, i.e., patient, parent, and paediatrician satisfaction with the system.

Methods

I do not agree that the majority of the material presented in this section belongs here. The focus of the methods section should be on the study that is currently presented. This should be limited to methods of administration, such as how patients, parents, and paediatricians use the system, and details of the satisfaction assessment and how these are scored.

3. The first 3 paragraphs (up to ‘use of the website’) do not describe the methods for the current study and should be presented in the background.

4. The ‘use of the website’ section is relevant to the current study and can be retained in the methods section.

5. Whilst the section on training is interesting it is not directly relevant to the results that are presented in this manuscript, and again, this belongs to the background section.

6. The section on ‘Privacy’ has relevance to the current study and can be retained in the methods section.

7. The section on ‘Implementation’ is not relevant to the current study and should be presented in the background.

Results

Much of the information in the results section is not related to the results of the current study. In addition, much of the detail provided in this section refers to the methods of the study and so this information should be completed as recommended below and moved to the methods section of the manuscript.

8. Page 7, Lines 6-13 in the first paragraph under the results heading (‘All patients’ to ‘intervention group (n=63’)’). This section is confusing as it does not clearly represent the number of people taking part in the current study. It is debateable whether this information belongs to the methods or results, and this primarily an issue over reporting style. However, this section needs clarifying by stating the number of children, parents, and paediatricians that participated in reporting their satisfaction of using the system. Please clarify how many clinic visits each participant took part in – it is assumed that patients and parents reported on one visit and that paediatricians reported on every visit involving a study participant.

9. Page 8, lines 6-9 (‘Before doctor’s visit…’ to ‘was applied [21]’). Please state number of children belonging to each age group and number/proportion of
parents/children who completed the satisfaction questions.

10. Page 8, lines 11-15. Please clarify times scale for reporting satisfaction, providing mean and range of days post clinic visit that satisfaction data were reported.

11. Page 8, lines 11-15. This section alludes to multiple survey questions being asked, but it is not clear what responses are reported as results. Does the current manuscript only report the evaluation of PROfile, or does it include the satisfaction with the doctor’s visit and other question as well? This section needs expansion and more detail.

12. Page 8, lines 11-15. Please clarify whether the survey questions were different for parents and children, and whether the satisfaction surveys were different for children of different ages. Please state the number and type of questions that were asked for each respondent group and state the response options that were available for each question.

13. Page 8, lines 11-15. Please state how each satisfaction question or measure was scored and analysed.

14. Page 8 lines 16-21. As stated above, it is not clear how many satisfaction questions were asked, what the questions were relating to, or how these were scored. This makes commenting on the results reported a little difficult. Suggestions of data that should be reported are given below, and it is possible that this data can be best summarised in a table:

a. Please state the proportion of satisfaction questionnaires that were reported by parents Vs children for each age group. Provide mean and variability of responses for each question or measure for children and parents. Indicate the distribution of responses for questions that were not responded to as ‘useful’.

b. Please state the number of satisfaction questionnaires completed by each paediatrician (it is alluded to that the paediatricians completed these after every visit, therefore it is assumed that there are multiple satisfaction reports for the paediatricians). Did all paediatricians respond to all questions for all visits ‘useful’ or were there variations by doctors, visits, and questions? Please give mean and variability of responses for each question for paediatricians as a group, and if relevant for individuals.

Discussion

15. The discussion should focus on reviewing the results presented. Whilst it seems that most patients, parents, and paediatricians felt that the system was useful, it is important to report and examine ‘non-useful’ responses as these may give some insight into any problems that the users may have had with the application and how the system could be improved for the future. Please discuss the range of responses to the questions.

16. Page 9, lines 8-10. Please give the number/proportion of patients in your clinic who have not been able to use the KLIK system due to lack of internet access and the number/proportion of patients who chose to use the internet access point at the outpatient department rather than at home. This information may be placed in methods/results if preferred.
Minor Essential Revisions

Abstract

17. The presentation of results needs clarifying; please state the number of paediatricians, patients and parents taking part in the study and their individual (mean group) ratings of the system.

Background

18. On page 3, lines 13-15, the comments on ceiling effects and randomization need references.

The authors may consider the following references:


Results

19. The first 6 lines (‘children and adolescents’ to ‘advice and referrals.’) are not results. The first 3 lines belong to the Background section; the next 3 lines belong to Methods.

20. Page 8 lines 11-15. In this section, please clarify whether parents or children or parents and children completed the satisfaction surveys.

Discussion

21. Please include limitations of the research. Please include acknowledgement that the study includes a relatively small sample size due to the preliminary nature of the work.

Discretionary Revisions

Discussion

22. Page 9, line 1. The use of the word ‘profound’ is peculiar, with connotations to philosophical or theoretical research. Do the authors mean ‘in depth’, ‘thorough’, or ‘ground breaking’?

23. Page 9, lines 4-14. This section is very interesting, with implications for other researchers across Europe. Please provide figures for the proportion of homes in the Netherlands who are reported to have internet access (referenced).

24. Page 10, lines 19-22. This section raises an important issue about evaluating the experiences of parents. It would be nice if the authors could reflect on the results of the parent-reported satisfaction of the web-application and comment on
how the web-application and clinic visits could be improved to support parents.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I can confirm that I have no competing interests in relation to the paper that I have reviewed.