Reviewer's report

**Title:** Do Electronic Health Records Affect the Patient-Psychiatrist Relationship? A Before & After Study of Psychiatric Outpatients

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 17 July 2009

**Reviewer:** Joseph Cafazzo

**Reviewer's report:**

This manuscript reports on an often-understudied population in relation to eHealth and is a needed contribution to the literature.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

This reviewer has concerns over the use of the validated instrument, PSQ-18. Although the authors acknowledged that the modifications that were made to the instrument might have affected its validity, it is this reviewer’s opinion that this was most certainly the case. The minor modifications such as the substitutions of “psychiatric” for “medical” and “psychiatrist” for “physician” would likely have no affect on the instrument’s validity. However, adding “local” questions within sections of the instrument, removing questions, and reversing the Likert scale on selected questions would most certainly have.

Therefore, the reporting of the subscales of the PSQ-18 of “General Satisfaction”, “Technical quality”, “Interpersonal manner”, “Communication”, “Time Spent with Doctor” are not valid and should be not reported as such to avoid the use of these data for comparison with other studies using the instrument.

As well, “locally generated” questions subscales are reported alongside the PSQ-18 subscales. There is no mention of how these subscales were calculated and what the basis of the comparison is.

The reporting of the means scores in addition to the mean differences would be of interest to the reader.

Minor Essential Revisions

There appears to be a two-year gap between recruitment of the pre and post test subjects that is unexplained.

Discretionary Revisions

Second paragraph of the “Background” section: It may not be immediately apparent to the reader as to how an EHR could affect eye contact. Elaboration might be helpful here.

**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.