Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Factors Influencing Decision Making in Orthopedic Surgery - an international online survey of 1147 orthopedic surgeons

**Version:** 3  **Date:** 13 August 2012

**Reviewer:** Dawn Stacey

**Reviewer’s report:**

August 10, 2012

Dear Editor BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders,

Re: Factors influencing decision making in orthopedic surgery – an international online survey of 1147 orthopedic surgeons

Thank you for the invitation to review this paper and provide feedback. Guidelines for standardized reporting of studies could be used to improve the way the paper is formatted. Below are several examples of changes that need to be made and/or suggestions to strengthen the paper. Once a revised paper is drafted it should be reviewed by an English language editor.

1. Questions posed by the authors well defined – NO. in fact, there are no objectives or research questions provided
2. Methods appropriate and well described – NO, they are inadequate
3. Data sound? Unclear because of inadequate methods
4. Manuscript adhere to relevant standards for reporting? NO
5. Discussion and conclusions well balanced and supported? No
6. Limitations of the work clearly stated – YES but incomplete
7. Authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which this builds – YES but some references are missing
8. Title and abstract convey what was found – not completely
9. Writing acceptable – needs English editor

Title does not reflect the focus of the study – rather than ‘factors influencing decision making’ I would suggest ‘sources of information influencing…’ MAJOR

Abstract:
- Missing the objective of the study and study design MAJOR
- How was the survey designed
- Need a better description of the analysis rather than just saying “statistically evaluated” MAJOR
- Results need to have the response rate added and statistics to support statements MAJOR
- The conclusions do not reflect the findings. The current conclusion could be a result of the potential for response bias with participants indicating what they think the authors wanted to hear MAJOR

Introduction
- References need to be added to support many statements. MAJOR
- There needs to be more consistent use of terms. For example the first sentence says ‘implants and materials’ and then implants and techniques MINOR
- No objective or research questions are provided at the end of the introduction MAJOR
- The sentences beginning “we developed a questionnaire focusing primarily on the factors…” - this needs to be moved to the methods section MAJOR

Material and methods
- Needs to have the study design added MAJOR
- Needs more details on how the sequence was randomized MAJOR
- There is no analysis methods provided MAJOR

Results
- “overall 12,005 orthopedic surgeons were contacted” – this statement is incorrect because later there is a report that >3000 were not able to be contacted because of wrong emails etc MAJOR
- Table 1 – how were incompletes defined MAJOR
- What were the eligibility criteria? Where did the mailing addresses come from? MAJOR
- Response rate for figure 2 is >100% MINOR
- Need to have a table of the characteristics of participants rather than report each characteristic in separate figure. You could have the department heads’ characteristics reported separately from other MINOR
- The results only start later in the paper – this needs to be moved up to include characteristics of participants and response rate MAJOR
- How was the survey developed and tested? For example the question on rating sources of information on the internet is rather vague given you could go to electronic journals available on the internet or to evidence-based programs or to company websites MAJOR

Discussion
- These sources of information should be discussed in terms of their effectiveness for changing knowledge, attitudes and uptake in clinical practice – see EPOC website and work of individuals such as Jeremy Grimshaw MAJOR
- The second paragraph more or less repeats results and % provided within results section rather than summarizes results. There is reference to studies in the last sentence but no reference citations are provided in the reference list MAJOR
- The conclusion provided may be a discussion point but it does not really reflect the results MAJOR

Format
- I don’t think this paper followed journal guidelines for format – all figures and tables should be at the end of the paper and not within MAJOR
- The paper was single spaced – usually journals require double spacing DISCRETIONARY

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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