Author's response to reviews

Title: Evaluation of an online interactive Diabetes Needs Assessment Tool (DNAT) for health professionals: Results of a randomised controlled trial

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear BMC Medical Education editors,

We would like you to consider our paper (Evaluation of an online Diabetes Needs Assessment Tool (DNAT) for health professionals: Results of a randomised controlled trial) for publication in BMC Medical Education.

We describe the results of a large randomised controlled trial comparing the effectiveness of a new interactive online learning tool for diabetes with self-directed online learning, in a large sample of health professionals. We are keen for you to publish this paper as it is of direct relevance to your readership and is likely to attract significant interest due to its design and size. The published study protocol has already attracted a lot of readers and has been granted the status of “highly accessed” for its age. Continuing Professional Development studies are often small, uncontrolled, and tend to focus on a single outcome. This RCT was large, conducted in two languages and measured the effect on knowledge, acceptability and self-reported practice change. Whilst the trial did not demonstrate a significant difference between the learning groups, it did show that both groups changed as a result of the interventions and that online learning is effective.

This paper is not under consideration at another journal, but has been presented at two scientific meetings (see the manuscript's acknowledgement section for details of where). The trial was registered before participants were recruited into the trial (Current Controlled Trials ISRCTN67215088, www.ISRTN.org) and the study protocol has already been published:

Authors’ contributions

SS formulated the research question, designed the study, helped with trial management and interpretation of the results, and wrote the first draft of this manuscript. RDJ is Principal Investigator and joint guarantor of this paper with SS. RDJ developed the DNAT and knowledge tests, and helped with formulating the research question, study design, interpretation of the results and revising the manuscript. CP was Chief Information Officer at onExamination and led the software design team that enabled the DNAT to run on the onExamination platform and project managed the study design and helped revise the manuscript. RP contributed to the study design, formulated the statistical analysis plan, independently conducted the statistical analysis, and helped revise this manuscript. KW contributed to the study design and helped revise this manuscript. TK contributed to the study design and managed the recruitment plan for the German participants, and helped revise this manuscript. GA contributed to the study design, helped in the technical provision of the learning interventions and the learning management system, and helped revise the manuscript. DO contributed to the study design, interpretation of the results, and helped revise the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Kind regards

Sara Schroter