Reviewer's report

Title: A real time locating system observes physician styles during walk-rounds: a pilot study

Version: 1 Date: 17 March 2013

Reviewer: Scott Wright

Reviewer's report:

This topic is an interesting one and I was pleased to have the opportunity to review it.

The following points limit the usefulness of the paper and I am afraid that this reviewer does not believe the paper makes a big contribution to the literature:

- this technology should have allowed many physician-teachers to be followed on multiple days of rounding. Instead, a very small number of physician-teachers were followed on 1 morning.
- because there was an observer following the physician-teachers around, the rtls was not needed, it added little.
- useful results might have included things like the frequency of revisiting a specific room, or the frequency of retracing steps (e.g. seeing one patient in the west wing, then seeing a patient in the east week, and then returning to the west wing = inefficient walking / rounding). Such data was not included.
- In the figures, it is not possible to see or make sense of the pattern or the path that the physician-teacher took. The authors' belief that patterns or styles could be detected is not appreciated by this reviewer.

In the Methods and Results, the authors' failed to provide details about the day in the 'cycle' the rounding was being observed. The reviewer, who serves as a physician-teacher on an inpatient unit at a big academic institution, rounds differently and would be said to have a different style depending on the day that I was observed with my team (on call, post call, 'good' day...).

- The assumption of different styles that the physician-teachers have seems like an oversimplification of the truth and a misinterpretation of a very small amount of data (watching just a few physician-teachers on 1 morning)

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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