Reviewer's report

Title: Instructions to authors on case reporting: A survey of a core journals list

Version: 2 Date: 1 December 2003

Reviewer: Edson Moreira

Reviewer's report:

General

The question posed by the authors is relevant and well defined. It also has not been addressed in detail before. The methods are appropriate and well described (the data extraction form was piloted, among other initiatives to avoid discrepancies and improve consistency). The authors provided sufficient details to replicate their work.

There were some errors in reporting the data. In table 1, the percentages of "consent required" and "hypothesis generation" for all journals should be multiplied by 100 (the same is true in the text of the results section for "hypothesis generation" instead of 0.05% it should be 5%). In figure 1, there are 3 colors in the legend, but four colors in the graph (white, light gray, dark gray and black). Please clarify this.

The discussion and conclusions are succinct and adequately supported by the data. But I think the authors should elaborate more on their suggested checklist in table 2. This could be accomplished by adding a brief comment about each topic suggested.

The title and abstract accurately convey what has been found and the writing is acceptable.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

None