Reviewer’s report

Title: Randomized Controlled Trial Comparing Four Strategies for Delivering e-Curriculum to Health Care Professionals [ISRCTN88148532]

Version: 1 Date: 7 October 2005

Reviewer: David A Cook

Reviewer’s report:

General
This is an interesting and well-written paper that uses appropriate methodology to answer important questions. There has been relatively little published that provides an effective comparison of various distance-learning techniques, and the observation that there is relatively little difference between what the authors call the "bolus-drip" approach or the "push-pull" approach, is important for those attempting to deliver CME.

The authors make the point that the sample is self-selected and that the results are self-reported, and clearly a more complete study to confirm the findings would be desirable. It would also be useful to have data in a more conventional area of continuing professional learning. It is not clear whether a more mundane topic compared with complementary/alternative medicine might produce a different answer. I hope that the authors provide some follow-up research to deal with these issues.

I found it particularly interesting that the issue of payment emerged. The conventional wisdom that "you value what you pay for" even applies to CME!

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Nil

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Nil

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

You may want to comment that the area is a little outside the normal CME function and this may mean that a rather unusual group of health professionals may have entered the program. But this is not a requirement. The paper is very good as it stands.

What next?: Accept without revision

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests