Reviewer's report

Title: How residents and interns utilise and perceive the personal digital assistant versus UpToDate

Version: 1 Date: 24 October 2007

Reviewer: Timothy B Patrick

Reviewer's report:

General

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

(1) A major difficulty with this manuscript is that the comparison of physician use of and preference for PDAs versus Up To Date is misleading. A PDA is a handheld computer and Up To Date is a software application that may be accessed by a PDA. The brochure found at http://www.uptodate.com/img/ppc_broch.pdf describes PDA access to Up To Date. It might be helpful to reframe the comparison as one between certain specific software applications installed on PDAs used by physicians and Up To Date which might in the particular circumstances of the comparison only be available to the physicians on desktop computers.

(2) On page 6, the authors mention several statistical tests they made to compare groups of physicians, but later in the paper they report p-values without explicit reference to specific statistical tests. More explicit accounts of the data analysis are needed.

(3) There are inconsistencies in the reported median hours per week physicians used Up To Date. On page 7, the median hours per week for use of Up To Date are reported as .5 hours. On page 9, the median hours per week for use of Up To Date are reported as 1 hour. On page 13, the median hours are reported as .5 hours, and in Figure 2 the median hours are reported as 1 hour.

(4) There are inconsistencies in the reported median hours per week physicians used PDAs. On page 7, the median hours per week physicians used PDAs are reported as 0 hours. On page 8, the median hours are reported as .5 hours, on page 11 the median hours are reported as 0 hours, and on Figure 1 the median hours are reported as .5 hours.

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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)

(5) Figures 1 and 2 are only partially described and referenced in the text. It
would be helpful to have a more complete explanation of the Figures.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.