Reviewer's report

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

Version: 3 Date: 4 June 2008

Reviewer: Timothy B Patrick

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

None. In my previous review, I stated that

"On pages 8 and 9, the authors provide a list of software applications and knowledge sources that were available on the 54 PDAs used by physicians in this study. My understanding is that Up To Date was not installed on any of the 54 PDAs used by physicians in this study. Though the authors do not specify the distribution of the applications and knowledge sources on the 54 PDAs, it is the opinion of this reviewer that the comparison underlying this study is not one between the use of PDAs and the use of Up To Date per se, but rather is one between the use of the applications and knowledge sources installed on the 54 PDAs, as delivered by a PDA, and the use of Up To Date, as delivered by a computer other than a PDA. The authors should clarify the nature of this underlying comparison, particularly in the 23 cases in which the physician used both a PDA and Up To Date."

The authors have responded to this request for revision by clarifying the nature of the comparison and respond that

"It must be emphasised that our survey did not compare the usefulness of UpToDate versus PDAs per se. Rather, we found that the medical software downloaded on our doctors’ PDAs was perceived to be less useful than UpToDate for retrieving medical information. This may again reflect a lack of medical software support for our doctors’ PDAs."

I find the authors’ response appropriate and sufficient.

Minor Essential Revisions

None.

Discretionary Revisions

None.
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.