Reviewer's report

Title: Validation of the Work Observation Method By Activity Timing (WOMBAT) method of conducting time-motion observations in critical care settings: an observational study

Version: 2 Date: 16 February 2011

Reviewer: Phillip Asaro

Reviewer's report:

In general, the manuscript is much improved. Most of the issues have been reasonably addressed. However, the following issues should be addressed:

The conclusion section of the Abstract states that the data "demonstrate its utility for comparing work-flows before and after the introduction..." This is a stretch since no before and after comparison was done. You might say that its demonstrated utility in recording time-motion data in the ICU setting supports the plan to do a before and after study in the ICU. Although unsupported statements are problematic anywhere in a scientific paper, it seems particularly problematic as a Conclusion. The conclusion in the paper itself does not use this wording.

The conclusion that the data do not support a Hawthorne effect assumes that if the effect occurs, it would extinguish over the observation period. This is a major assumption that has face validity by my estimation. However, if the assumption is not true and the effect instead persists, the measure used would fail to identify the effect. This possibility and/or the basis for making the assumption should be mentioned.

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

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