Reviewer's report

Title: Impact of Computerized Physician Order Entry (CPOE) System on the Outcome of Critically Ill Adult Patients: A Before-After Study

Version: 1 Date: 5 April 2011

Reviewer: Ross Koppel

Reviewer's report:

This is a useful contribution. The writing is clear. The “science” is careful.

There’s one massive problem, but it can be easily addressed.

Small stuff: In the abstract and introduction, the authors flail about before guiding the reader to see there is NO DIFFERENCE between the pre and the post. Many readers will appreciate such guidance when reviewing the Odds Ratios and CIs.

Big stuff: 1. It’s missing references to why CPOE failed to improve the outcomes. I suggest review of the work of Ben-Tzion Karsh et al (JAMIA…a few months ago) and Harrison and Koppel (JAMIA…about 2 years ago). Also the book “HIT or miss” published by AHIMA about a year ago.

Biggest problem: The authors’ conclusions are utterly and totally bizarre. Deeply twisted, in fact. A hospital-wide HIT system costs about $150 million. Implementation costs about $600 million. It often takes years of work by everyone involved. To say that the result of those massive efforts was that the outcomes were no worse (“equally safe”) is disingenuous. The authors should alter the conclusion to indicate that their data reveal “no improvement.” If I (or anyone) were to spend years and almost a billion dollars on, say, altering a house, and the result was “equally OK,” would you call that a success?

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

No conflict