Reviewer's report

Title: Qualitative evaluation of a diabetes electronic decision support tool: views of users

Version: 2 Date: 3 May 2012

Reviewer: Monika Kastner

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Summary
This qualitative study explored the use and uptake of an electronic decision support tool for diabetes management. However, the development and description of the tool and the methodology requires some clarification, and the discussion could be strengthened. I provided some suggestions below that could be considered to provide additional clarity.

Background
• How was the tool developed? It would be important to know more detail about the tool (i.e., were end-users involved in the development process? What evidence (and how selected) was used to develop the tool? Any other work that led to the tool?
• It would also be important to know the details of the output of the intervention (i.e., what physicians would see on their EMR) – perhaps the authors could provide a screenshot of this?
• Is the tool intended to be used at the point of care?
• What is the role of nurse practitioners in the practices?

Methods
• It should be explicitly stated at the beginning of the methods that this was a qualitative study of telephone interviews
• On what basis were practices selected (ie, convenience, the specific EMR system, etc)
• What were the specific outcomes? This is not clear
• There is no mention of the implementation process other than that the Pharmaceutical alliance “installed” the tool in practices:
  o How long did implementation take? Who was involved?
  o How was tool integrated with the EMR systems?
  o Was practice workflow considered during implementation? How?
  o Were practitioners trained in how to use/interpret the tool?
  o What was the role of nurse practitioners in the process?
• How were the interviews conducted? It would be helpful to include the semi-structured questions in an appendix – were these standardized and pre-tested?
• Were the sessions audio-recorded? How was data collected?
• Authors mention that data analysis involved thematic analysis – this should be elaborated re: how this was done and whether this was done in duplicate, etc

Results
• It’s a bit confusing how the authors indicate that 22 consented but only 15 participated (none of which included NPs) – but this is not clear until the second paragraph – this should be indicated earlier, and the demographic table should reflect this (ie, include only data on the 15 who participated). It’s also misleading because the abstract states that 22 GPs and 2 NPs participated, which is not the case.
• It might be helpful to begin the “Interview findings” section by indicating that thematic analysis resulted in 3 major themes and then begin describing each.
• To clarify the findings and to improve the utility of this manuscript for readers, It might be helpful to include a summary table highlighting the facilitators and barriers to using the tool and another table highlighting suggestions for changes

Discussion
• How does this work compare with what has been done by others around clinical decision support tools? … and more specifically in diabetes care? How do patients fit into this? There is a lot of work around patient self-management and its potential to improve diabetes disease management – could this tool fit into what has already been done? How is it different and advance the knowledge of what we already know?
• What are next steps? Is the tool going to remain in practice? Are there plans to modify according to findings?

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 don’t have any competing interests.