Reviewer’s report

Title: Informatics Leadership Models in the Academic Clinical and Translational Research Enterprise

Version: 3 Date: 11 June 2012

Reviewer: Julio Facelli

Reviewer’s report:

This is a very interesting paper that addresses issues of importance to our community. There is no question that it is well within the scope of the Journal and that the questions asked in the survey are of importance. The results of the paper are valuable and will serve well many institutions that are now struggling with the challenges of providing infrastructure support for research programs centered in data reuse.

I strongly support the publication of this paper, but I will suggest that the authors consider the following issues before final acceptance:

i) While the survey and the results are for US based institutions, translational science is a global enterprise. For a publication in an international journal it will be most appropriate if in both the abstract and in the introduction the authors provide a broader international context of the organizational challenges associated with translational science data infrastructure. Certainly there are numerous publications in international journals that will be important to cite here.

ii) Perhaps the authors should discuss in pg. 4 that the required data infrastructure for translational research is very similar to the infrastructure required for other important research agendas based in reusing clinical data. Among them it is worth citing: drug repositioning, comparative effectiveness research, post market drug safety surveillance, etc. This may be obvious to informaticians, but not to leaders of many academic health science centers.

iii) Pg. 5. “systematic survey” may be a bit too broad to describe this work.

iv) Pg. 7. the authors may want to emphasize that the results primary represent the opinions of the informaticians, which may be different that the perception of users vis a vis accessibility, etc. Certainly a similar survey of users will be extremely valuable.

v) Pg. 10. The section “Thematic Evaluation…” it is very difficult to read, the paper will be much more readable if the authors explain in more detail how they performed the grounded-theory analysis as well as if they provide a better description of the AHC included in this study.

vi) The Discussion section has three types of materials, background comments that should be more appropriate for the introduction, comments on the specific results of the survey that are germane to the section and contextual comments that represent that authors views. While for the most part I consider that the
contextual comments are correct, I also believe that they cannot be inferred directly from the survey. In my opinion these contextual comments should be clearly separated from the specific results of the survey and identified as such.

vii) Pg. 13. “empirically indefensible” please provide a reference for this statement.

viii) Pg. 14, in Limitations. An important limitation that should be explicitly acknowledged is the lack of user representation in the survey.

ix) Table 4. The Axis 2 and Axis 3 have not been defined, please clarify.

x) Figure 1, the authors may want to consider adding Biophysics and Biochemistry as supporting basic sciences. Medical Sciences may be a better term than Medicine

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

None