Reviewer's report

Title: Use and Satisfaction with Key Functions of a Common Commercial Electronic Health Record: a Survey of Primary Care Providers

Version: 2 Date: 25 April 2013

Reviewer: Sylvia Hysong

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this revised version of the manuscript. I appreciate the authors’ efforts to address the concerns in my initial review. However, I believe they may have misunderstood my intentions -- if this is because I wasn't clear in my initial comments, my apologies. So I will try to be more clear here. In several of my comments I expressed concern about a larger issue, then gave illustrative examples, (my first comment about the introduction was a good example of this). The examples were meant to be exactly that; my intent was for the authors to address the larger issue, not the specific example given. Unfortunately, however, the authors did latter rather than the former.

<b>MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS</b>

1. The contribution of the paper to the literature is still not clear. In response to my comment about the introduction, the authors mention on p. 5 that we know little about provider satisfaction with specific EHR functions and that knowing more would help better "realize the intended benefits of the EHR." Though this certainly makes the gap in the literature more clear, I guess fundamentally for me the so what? of this research question is still missing. Why should we care if providers are dissatisfied with EHR functions? What is the consequence of providers being dissatisfied with EHR's functions? In short, why should I be compelled to turn the page?

2. Please provide the survey in an appendix. Referee 2 requested it and was right to do so, even if the survey is Epic specific. I would also suggest, now that there would be an appendix about the survey, moving some of the details provided in the text about survey development (which I appreciated, thank you) to the appendix, where there is more room to go into more detail about how it was developed. It will also free up room in the main body for other text. The authors state they didn't do psychometric analyses because "items in the survey were very straightforward patterns of use and simple opinions." By providing the actual survey, the authors will likely answer many of referee 2’s and my original questions about the quality of your only data source, as well as some new questions that came to mind on this second read of the manuscript (e.g., if they didn't do psychometric analyses, what did the items actually look like that the authors thought could function correctly without testing?; p. 9, "about 1/2 of PCP's 'usually document' the history" -- what were the other response choices?; what type of items and response choice format were used? "very few used
dictation" -- do you mean classic dictation where someone manually transcribes an audio recording, or speech recognition?)

3. Why the focus on structured documenters? On p. 8 the authors discuss their analyses about structured documenters. My question here is, were structured documenters the use pattern the authors were aiming to study in the first place? If so, then the paper's introduction should look different, with more emphasis on the value or problems with this type of documentation, and again, a big focus on the so what?. If this is not the case, and the claim in the intro that the aim is to describe various use patterns is accurate, then why is there little if any discussion about other patterns of use? Why not give equal airtime to the various use patterns found, instead of focusing so much on structured documenters?

4. Discussion. After reading the revised manuscript and its findings I am left with the question of who other than Epic designers would want to know the findings reported here. Again, because the so what? is not really addressed in the intro, it makes the generalizability of these findings questionable. I guess I am asking for a little more interpretation on the part of the authors.

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS

1. p. 7 "Guided by literature review, the survey was designed and refined by reseach team members with expertise in ...[4-6, 10, 11]" Do these references refer to the studies they used in the lit review? Or are these meant to highlight the team's expertise? Please clarify.

2. Make sure subject verb agreement is correct throughout when using the word "data", which is a plural noun (e.g., p. 8, "descriptive data is expressed" should read "descriptive data are expressed")

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

1. Consider citing Hysong et al. 2010 (PMCID: PMC2995633) and/or 2011 (PMCID: PMC3100236) in your introduction paragraph about suboptimal use of specific functions of the EHR. It might help bolster this argument.

2. This is not a revision request, it's actually just a question out of curiosity -- p. 14 "Our study suggests that using an EHR can be considerably time-consuming... providers are spending greater than 9 extra hours a week... completing documentation in the EHR." How are people on paper doing it? Are they really that much faster than EHR? Is there value in that the paper people aren't getting, that makes the extra time worthwhile? When this gets published (in the comments section on the website or perhaps in the next response to reviewers), would you mind commenting on this?

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests