Author's response to reviews

Title: Benefits of a physician-facing tablet presentation of patient symptom data: comparing paper and electronic formats

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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To the Editor:

We are pleased to resubmit our second revised paper entitled, “On the benefits of a physician-facing tablet presentation of patient symptom data: comparing paper and electronic formats” to BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making.

All of the reviewers’ comments were listed as discretionary, but we have taken care to address them as noted below.

Sincerely,

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RESPONSES TO REVIEWERS

Reviewer 1

1) Abstract – Result
You write “The results from the medical professionals were identical”.
Can you find a less stringent expression for “the same”? In fact they aren’t identical. I’ve overlooked this issue in my first review.

RESPONSE: Yes, “identical” is rather stringent. We have changed this to say “similar”

2) End of Introduction
“Can this medium-scale paper presentation ...”
I think this should read: “Can this medium-scale electronic presentation ...”

RESPONSE: Indeed, this should read “electronic”. We have fixed this error.

3) Section „Method: Experiment 1 – Paper vs. iPad“, „Participants“
„Eighteen undergraduates, drawn from the general student population, ...”
I guess “… from the Rice University” looking at your affiliation and the above sentence about the Review Board.

RESPONSE: We have modified the sentence to be explicit. It now reads “…Eighteen undergraduates, drawn from the general student population at Rice University…”

4) Experiment 1, Results
On the first appearance of the statistics (M, SD, Mdn, IQR) you could write them out. And it’s IQR not IRQ.

RESPONSE: We have spelled out the abbreviations on the first appearance of these terms. We have also corrected IRQ to IQR.

5) Experiment 1, Results, Task Completion Time
“… when using the iPad (M = 94s, SD = 3.7s, Mdn=98.5s, IRQ=25.8s) than …”
A SD of 3.7 seems to me very small compared to the IQR and the SD of the paper version. And it is still the same value as in the preceding manuscript version termed SEM. Maybe it should read 15.7s.

RESPONSE: Yes, this was an oversight. The SEM is 3.7 and the SD is 15.7. This has been corrected.
"Minor issues not for publication"

1) You decided to use a Wilcoxon signed-ranks test as your only testing procedure. You could state this once in a general method or statistics paragraph (or once per experiment) instead of writing “using a Wilcoxon signed rank test” for every test result. In such a paragraph – if you decide to make one - you could also write out the abbreviations for your descriptive statistics (M, SD, Mdn, IQR) used in the paper.

RESPONSE: We did spell out the abbreviations as you suggested, but feel that explicitly telling the reader what test is used is a reasonable way to proceed, since some readers may only reference specific sections.

2) The „Questionnaire scoring“
You are writing a general formula for scoring: “(1/number of parts) * number of correctly answered parts.“ This was appropriate for the former version of the manuscript. Now as the reader knows that “number of parts” is not varying but a constant (number of parts = 5) you can simplify this term by placing the value 5 in the formula: “1/5 * number of correctly answered parts” or “0.2 * number of correctly answered parts”

RESPONSE: We had talked about this, but decided that putting the numeric value in might confuse readers who just looked at the formula. Leaving the generic formula in makes it perfectly clear how this is calculated.

3) Method: Experiment 2 – iPad vs. iPod – Materials
“The same Experiment 1, six-question …” leave out the comma.
“… were used to data performance …” should read “… were used to assess data performance …”

RESPONSE: We have removed the comma and added in the lost word “assess”.

Reviewer 3

No further comments from reviewer 3