Reviewer's report

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

Version: 3 Date: 29 April 2013

Reviewer: Gerold Schwantzer

Reviewer's report:

The Authors have thoroughly adressed all my raised revisions, even the discretionary ones.
I’m glad that the paper is still easy to read and (as I expected) that the use of nonparametrical statistics leads to the same inferences.
It’s easy to comprehend what they did and what they found.
However, there are still some “commas” which I classed discretionary.

- Discretionary Revisions

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.

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

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.

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.

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.
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.

The „Questionnaire scoring“

You are writing a general formula for scoring: 

“\( \frac{1}{\text{number of parts}} \times \text{number of correctly answered parts} \).”

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: “\( \frac{1}{5} \times \text{number of correctly answered parts} \)” or “0.2 \times \text{number of correctly answered parts}”

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 …”.

I apologise for my question 3.2) asking who determines what is a critical symptom, for it’s not relevant in this paper. Thank you for the answer, anyway.

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:

I declare that i have no competing interests.