Author’s response to reviews

Title: Stroke patients’ utilisation of extrinsic feedback from computer-based technology in the home: a realistic evaluation

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Dr Irene Pala
BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making
236 Gray's Inn Road
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19/04/13
Re: Manuscript for BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making

Dear Dr Pala,

I would like to submit a manuscript ‘Stroke patients’ utilisation of extrinsic feedback from computer-based technology in the home: a realistic evaluation’ for your consideration.

This paper describes the innovative application of a realistic evaluation (RE) methodology to explore the utilisation of feedback for post-stroke upper-limb rehabilitation in the home.

Advances in information and communications technology (ICT) have allowed for the development of various systems to complement stroke rehabilitation that could be used in the home setting. However, these often complex interventions provide unique challenges, therefore the adoption of a RE methodological approach which addresses, ‘what works for whom and in what circumstances and respects’ has allowed for the refinement of the theories underpinning the intervention within the context of delivery from the perspective of multiple stakeholders. The adoption of RE in this research also gave an important innovative dimension to the study since this methodology has not been used in the development of technology for rehabilitation.

The aims and scope of BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making recognises the challenges relating to the design, development, implementation, use, and evaluation of health information technologies and decision-making within the healthcare setting where there are multiple stakeholders with varying perspectives.

Following recommendation from the Journal Editorial Office, I have amended the manuscript by adding the additional ethics approval information:

• ‘Following the acquisition of all necessary institutional ethical and governance approvals…’ (p. 8).
• ‘Following acquisition of all necessary National Research Ethics approval from the South Yorkshire Research Ethics Committee (Ref: 08/H1310/63) and governance approval from the Sheffield Health and Social Research Consortium…’ (p.11).

This paper is part of the SMART programme of research funded by Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). This work forms part of the research exploring and developing technology systems for upper-limb post-stroke rehabilitation (www.thesmartconsortium.org). The preparation of the manuscript was supported by the NIHR Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care for South Yorkshire.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jack Parker