Reviewer's report

Title: What Data is Important? Clinical Data Needs in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Electronic Medical Record

Version: 4
Date: 31 July 2014

Reviewer: Eric S Kirkendall

Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

N/A

- Minor Essential Revisions

1. (Background, second paragraph, last sentence) There should be a reference for the HITECH Act, even if it’s a .gov website URL.

2. (Methods, Data Collection, Instruments, second sentence) The authors should include the 7 possible responses for the Likert items. As is, they only list the 2 extreme answers, not needed and absolutely necessary. Since the actual survey itself is not included (which would be helpful to see the structure as well), readers will not have any specifics regarding the other 5 possible responses.

- Discretionary Revisions

3. (Methods, Data Collection, Instruments, last sentence) The authors include a sentence that states they collected free-text information at the end of the survey, but they do not share that data. It is probably fine to exclude this sentence if the data is not found anywhere in the manuscript.

4. (Multiple areas of the manuscript) The authors refer to the EMR viewer platform, when they are really referring to the human-computer interface or presentation layer of the EMR software. While this is a somewhat trivial point, I think most readers from the IT or informatics communities will more readily recognize the latter two terms. The authors can consider making a term switch in the manuscript.

5. (Discussion, paragraph 4, last sentence) In whole I think the discussion is very well-written and accurate. Their results make an argument for omitting some clinical data from the EMR interfaces, but I think they should also take into account several counterpoints to that statement. First, the survey questions asked about data elements for “routine clinical decisions.” Many data elements in the EMR may only be important during very rare, but high-acuity situations. It is not known if the survey respondents would have rated the items differently if asked other ways that excluded the word “routine” (such as “Rate the importance of the following data elements in delivering clinical care”). In addition, many data
elements of similar nature are grouped within EMR interfaces for obvious reasons, so it is often difficult to justify putting very similar data elements in different areas of the interface because it lends itself to user confusion. These are just two considerations that might warrant mentioning as caveats to omitting from an interface.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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.