Reviewer's report

Title: A Case-Based Approach to Shared Decision Making Skills Training for Clinicians

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Reviewer: James Dolan

Reviewer's report:

This report describes the development and initial validation of a case-based approach to teach clinicians how to involve patients in a shared decision making process. It also includes a list of shared decision making educational resources and a detailed conceptual framework of the shared decision making process.

Major compulsory revisions

1. The study’s conclusions need to more closely reflect the results.

Currently, the results are interpreted as showing that the case-based method improved primary care clinicians’ knowledge and confidence in the SDM process and their intent to implement SDM in practice. However, only about 75% of the study subjects who were not decision aid users, arguably the primary target audience for an educational intervention like this, indicated that they intended to engage their patients in SDM. Results of assessments of subjects perceived ability to help support patient decisions were similarly middling.

It is unclear from the current manuscript what a reasonable threshold is for determining a successful intervention and if this threshold was determined a priori. The paper would be significantly strengthened if this information was included.

Another significant limitation that is not sufficiently incorporated in the discussion is that the study was conducted in a volunteer sample. It is highly likely that the results are better than would be expected with other clinician groups due to selection bias.

2. It appears that this study only covers 2.5 levels of the Kirkpatrick model, not 3.

A strength of the study is the use of a formal evaluation framework. However, there is a big difference between expressed confidence and intentions immediately after a training intervention and actual implementation down the line. This limitation should be highlighted more than it currently is.

3. The manuscript focuses too much on a very preliminary evaluation process and not enough on important theoretical and developmental contributions.

Right now, the focus of the manuscript is on a rather limited evaluation of the case-based method. This approach minimizes two more significant
outcomes/implications of the study: 1) the rationale and argument for using a case-based approach in the first place and 2) the conceptual model that was developed.

I think the manuscript would be much stronger if there was additional discussion of: a) the role of a case-based approach to SDM education, including information about other existing approaches that have been utilized (based on the search that was done) and whether this is the first case-based SDM training program or not, and b) the use of the conceptual model to guide SDM education initiatives. In addition to additional discussion within the manuscript, I think these two issues are important enough to be highlighted in the study conclusions.

**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