Author's response to reviews

Title: A Controlled Trial of Automated Classification of Negation from Clinical Notes

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Editorial Team
BioMed Central

Dear Editors:

Attached please find the revised manuscript. Here are the point-by-point responses to the comments from the reviewers for our paper entitled “Controlled trial of Automated Classification of Negation from Clinical Notes.”

The first comments were from Sam Heard who felt that the manuscript was well written, was of great interest, and clearly defined the problem. He indicated some repetition within the introduction and the repetition has been deleted and additional content has been added for additional explication. He believes that we accurately conveyed the information that was found, and other than the repetition, he only requested that we provide more description of the tables, which has been added to the manuscript. All of the editorial comments on syntax were applied to the paper.

Jeremy Rogers reviewed this manuscript, and he thought that the introduction needed to be fleshed out, and we have done so. He asked for references on natural language processing and we have provided a full description of the history of the development of natural language processing. He mentioned that it was not clear what the end point for success was in this kind of an evaluation, and we have quoted some data from our laboratory that was gained in the usability lab and showed what clinicians felt they needed in terms of reliability in order to use this kind of technology, and we have then used that as a benchmark for the judgments that follow. We have increased the description of the interpretation of the results within the results section. However, we did leave some of the discussion regarding that interpretation into the discussion section of the paper. We were asked to qualify the results by saying that the performance varied in different areas of the record as reported in table 2, and we have done so. The reviewer asked us to qualify whether there were 41 discrete patient records from 41 discrete patients, which indeed they were, and we have clarified this in the manuscript and thank the reviewers.

Adam Wilcox reviewed the paper and had only minor suggestions. We have included greater explication. We have removed the qualitative statements like, “that is quite excellent” regarding the results from the results section of the paper as suggested.

Dr. Kalra also reviewed this, and he had no major compulsory revisions or minor revisions. He also noted the repetition, and we have deleted that repetition. He mentioned to classify how we handled uncertain negation such as “probably non” and we have described within the body of the paper that these were considered a type of uncertainty, and we thank Dr. Kalra. We added greater explication regarding
legends of the tables. Dr. Kalra suggested that we put in a graphic to explain the automated negation assignment grammar, and we have done so.

This concludes our review of the commentary of this manuscript. We believe that we have substantively answered all of the critiques, and attached manuscript we believe to be ready for acceptance for publication, and we look forward to the editorial board’s review.

Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate contact me.

Yours truly,

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