Reviewer's report

**Title:** Factors Affecting Information Use by General Pediatricians in Office Settings: A Grounded Theory Study

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 2 May 2005

**Reviewer:** Martin Dawes

**Reviewer's report:**

**General**
My conclusion is that this work is important and relevant. However in its present format it is not easy for a reader unfamiliar with the field and may lose its impact. My suggestion is that the paper is separated into its two major parts and resubmitted as two individual papers for back to back publication.

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**Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)**

Review

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined? The questions are new but there seem to be two. The first is whether using vignettes can identify clinicians information needs. The second is what those needs are for general pediatricians when seeing patients who have genetic or ID issues.

2. Methods: These were described well but because of the dual nature of the paper it was not always clear what method applied to which question. The qualitative approach was well defined. The use of only two experts to assign the attributes to the vignettes is perhaps an issue and it would have been better to see more. However as this paper was primarily dealing with proof of concept this number is appropriate. This is an example of the difficulty of combining proof of concept with actual results. In terms of results the numbers of experts applying attributes is probably too small. The sampling procedure is appropriate.

3. The coding of answers using grounded theory is briefly described but more description would be useful. Did the authors use any software to help them? How were discrepancies between the reviewers handled, did they feel saturation was achieved and how did they determine that?

4. The data seem sound and well controlled.

5. The first two parts of the results section repeats a lot of data that is present in the tables and should be considerably edited to avoid this. Which two types of questions did not match the Ely taxonomy and why? It would be useful to see more data on the vignette classifications. It could be that all the data in table 1 could be kept in the text and that a further table describing the vignette classifications in more detail could replace this. On the other hand there could be more qualitative description with quotes from the audio to enhance table 3 and let the reader see some of the actual thought processes behind these statements. The sources described were presumably sources that the clinicians would use in theory but the text seems to imply these sources were actually used. The authors should make this difference clear as they did not actually observe information retrieval.

6. The discussion is appropriate.

7. The title and abstract are confusing to the reader. This paper really is a combination of two pieces of research. The description of using vignettes to identify data about clinical information seeking behavior and secondly the results from that exercise as it relates to general pediatricians.

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**Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)**
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'