Reviewer's report

Title: Development and Initial Testing of a Computer-Based Patient Decision Aid to Promote Colorectal Cancer Screening for Primary Care Practice

Version: 1 Date: 15 August 2005

Reviewer: Vivek Goel

Reviewer's report:

General

Overall this is a well-written paper that describes an important advance in the development of decision aids. The ability to quickly update and customize a decision aid is quite valuable as technology is rapidly changing. This pilot study shows that it is feasible to develop such an aid and apply it in a diverse clinical population.

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

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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)

1) This is pilot study and is appropriately referred to as such throughout the paper. However, the conclusions in the abstract and the main paper are much more conclusive and should be appropriately tempered.

2) If possible provide a link to the decision aid so it can be viewed by the reader. The figures do not provide an appropriate sense of the aid and in particular how the patient is able to customize the content. Figure 1 does not show the main menu of choices but is instead the introduction to the aid.

3) It would be useful to describe the speed of computer and bandwidth requirements for use of the aid and the type of system on which usability testing was conducted.

4) For future work the investigators should consider using an objective measure of knowledge rather than subjective measures.

5) The discussion section can be reduced and should focus on the pilot stage results and not infer effectiveness as this is not possible in this study design. There is also some repetition in the discussion.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'