Author's response to reviews

Title: Evaluation of PROforma as a language for implementing medical guidelines in a practical context.

Authors:

David R Sutton (dsutton@brookes.ac.uk)
Paul Taylor (p.taylor@chime.ucl.ac.uk)
Kenneth Earle (Ken.Earle@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Revisions

We have slightly modified the definition we give of heuristic power in line with the comment of reviewer 1, we have also taken into account that reviewer’s comments on logical adequacy (the details are set out in our response to the reviewer below).

We have also corrected the typographic errors pointed out by the reviewers.

Specific responses to comments are listed below. (Note that the numbering of observations does not correspond to that used by the reviewers)

Points made by reviewer 1 (Samson Tu).

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. p. 17. "We found that the logic of the medical process involved could be readily described using the constructs provided by PROforma...." p. 17. "The actions described in the process description used in our system are intended to be mutually exclusive... However PROforma provides no mechanism by which such a constraint can be expressed, checked, or enforced." These two statements seems to contradict each other. ....

   Suggested change "We found that most of the logic of the medical process involved could be readily described using the constructs provided by PROforma...."

   We have adopted the suggested change.

2. p. 21-22. "Taking these decisions..." The topic was about logical adequacy and heuristic power; please explain and elaborate on how "the logical adequacy and heuristic support were factors in the decision."

   Suggested change: perhaps mention that PROforma is designed to model processes and decisions, not inferences based on statistical models.

   We have adopted the suggested change.

3. p. 24 "In general we feel that the PROforma meets the ...." above. Suggested change "PROforma meets most of the demands...."

   We have adopted the suggested change.

4. p. 25. "The most interesting reflections ... "? .... This reviewer fails to see how scoping decisions relate to the ability of the system to draw inferences and
solve problems. Either make the relationship clear or explain the category of "heuristic power."

Suggested change: redefine "heuristic power" to include whether the

Unfortunately the final part of the suggested change was omitted from the comments that reached us. We have modified our definition of heuristic power so that it describes the ability of the system to draw the required inferences and solve problems within its intended domains of application, and revised the paragraph to which the reviewer refers on p.25 so as to make clear the connection between the italicised phrase and the scoping decisions that have to be made.

Minor Essential Revisions

We have corrected all the errors pointed out to us by the reviewer.

Points made by reviewer 2 (Silvana Quaglini).

No revisions were requested by this reviewer.

Points made by reviewer 3 (David Kaufman).

Minor Essential Revisions

5. There are a few typos and grammatical errors....

We have corrected the errors pointed out by this reviewer.

Points made by reviewer 4 (J. F. Arocha).

No revisions were requested by this reviewer.