Reviewer's report

Title: House officer procedure documentation using a personal digital assistant: a longitudinal study

Version: 1 Date: 10 October 2005
Reviewer: Polun chang

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. Regarding the study data, is it possible that the authors could include more dimensions such as the completeness or correctiveness of data entered by using PDA vs index card? It would be more interesting to see some qualitative data, instead of the current quantitative data only.
2. It is unclear that what measure the authors use for this study. What do the numbers in Table 1 mean? Is that the median number of procedures recorded per week or for the entire three years? There is no unit marked in Table 1.

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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. It is unclear whether the pendragon form design is good and acceptable for the house officer or not. One challenge for the use of PDA is its interface. It is not easy to design a easy to use and useful form on PDA. We did use Pendragon Form but gave up due to its limited interface acceptability. Did the authors evaluate users’ acceptance of the tools. It is a loss that this paper didn’t report users’ subjective evaluation of the value of the PDA.
2. Task for the PDA was to record patient’s basic data, procedures performed, and patient’s status. PDA was used to replace the paper form as an alternative data entry form. No other function, such as to remind the users for data entry or errors, was mentioned. Therefore, the results might not be able to answer the complete value of PDA. In this study, we might only know whether the PDA could be used as an alternative tool. Should discuss this.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Reject because scientifically unsound

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.
Polun