Reviewer's report

Title: A web-based laboratory information system to improve quality of care of tuberculosis patients in Peru: functional requirements, implementation and usage statistics

Version: 1 Date: 16 July 2007

Reviewer: Terry John J HANNAN

Reviewer's report:

General

This paper can be considered an important publication in the implementation of Computerised Clinical Decision Support Systems in developing nations and offers experiences that can be utilised in developed more finacilly robust nations.

In assessing the work I use the journal guidelines.
1. The question poase dby the authors is well defined and addressed in the article.
2. It uses good scientific methods and the work can be replicated elsewhere which is in fact and end point encouraged by the authors.
3. The data is sound, well controlled and presented.
4. It adheres to relevant standards for dat reporting.
5. Balanced discussions and conclusions.
6. Title is appropriate
7. Acceptable legible writing.

The importance of this article is that it builds on previous experiences of the authors and emphasises that good information managment is essential for quality care. It demonstrates how social change and acceptance by local users is critical to success. In addition having the use of effective information managment tools can chnage the 'culture' of health care delivery and government policies. The clear linkage of outcomes to measurable costs is another important component of this paper.

The authors also provide the basis for 'shared information systems in health' with reduced costs and implementaton times which are critical factors in the implementaiton of these systems in developing nations. This sharing is facilitated by the use of Web-based technologies.

The paper also shows that these systems are affordable, local community involvement is essential.

I felt that Tables 1 and 2 in the Supplementary file may be somewhat redundant and do not add a great deal to the well writtne content of the article and could more than likely be omitted.
The "Figure 1 e-Chasqui patient page" should be included as it demonstrates how the simplicity of screen displays can be in providing computerised decision support and also shows the value of Summarisation as a communication tool for health care information.

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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)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'