Reviewer's report

Title: Physicians Perceptions of an Electronic Health Record-based Clinical Trial Alert Approach to Subject Recruitment: A Survey

Version: 4 Date: 5 March 2008

Reviewer: Mark Weiner

Reviewer's report:

The authors have satisfactorily addressed the critiques I raised in my earlier review. The discussion does try to put in perspective the finding that endocrinologists were more comfortable with and used the CTA more frequently than internists. It provides some reasonable explanations for the difference and reminds the reader to "be cautious not to over-conclude with regard to the differences." The authors do allude to the benefit of targeting the CTA more specifically in order to avoid a high number of false-positive alerts. I think the targeting they allude to is at the patient level, but targeting at the provider level may also improve response rates in two ways. First, perhaps targeting providers who have a special interest in the research domain will reach more people open to the CTA and therefore improve the response. Second, providers with a special interest may have a greater prevalence of patients who are eligible for the study. Therefore, the positive predictive value of any alert will likely be greater for these providers.

I cant prove this hypothesis with the existing data, but it may help explain why endocrinologists were more amenable to the CTA for a diabetes study than the internists.

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: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests