Reviewer's report

Title: Underutilization of Information and Knowledge in Everyday Medical Practice: Computer-based Solutions

Version: 3 Date: 22 October 2008

Reviewer: Padmanabhan Ramnarayan

Reviewer's report:

The authors have responded to some comments made as part of the previous review, but not fully understood the others.

Minor essential revisions

1. The authors acknowledge that the computer took a structured history because it was designed to do so, but that the physicians may have taken an incomplete history because they did not have a structure to taking a history (item 5 and 8). It is possible that introduction of a structured proforma is enough to get the physicians to take a better history. The authors have to mention this "checklist effect" in their discussion (this bias has been well described in the literature).

2. The conclusion of the summary states that "A combination of physician and computer-acquired histories, in non-emergent situations, with the latter available to the physician at the time he or she sees the patient, is a far superior method for collecting historical data than the physician interview alone". However, this study is not based on non-emergent patients but based on acutely ill patients, which the authors have taken the pains to mention in their response to item 2, where the computer system cannot be used "because medical ethics and liability law prevent prior interview of such patients by computer". The authors should modify the conclusion to reflect the study they have performed, not extrapolate to other settings.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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.