Reviewer's report

Title: Complementary roles of the hospital-wide Electronic health record and Clinical department systems

Version: 1 Date: 27 January 2009

Reviewer: Padmanabhan Ramnarayan

Reviewer's report:

This article deals with an important area of study for clinicians - the departmental electronic systems sitting outside a hospital-wide EHR. While the results from this study are very useful and should add to the literature on this topic, a number of issues need to be resolved first.

Major compulsory revisions

1. While the authors accept the limitation that the users interviewed were individuals with high degrees of motivation and involvement in the systems, therefore biased, the study methodology to include only 1 subject per CDS needs to be elaborated further. In addition, the limitations section is better placed in the discussion section. Was subject selection entirely random, voluntary or a convenience sample? Why did the authors not interview 2-3 different grades of users? Why did they not interview the IT department, who may have a very different view of the problems of having the CDS?

2. The implications of the authors' work is clear but the authors have not explained what steps can be taken to integrate CDS within EHRs. Do they propose a service-oriented architecture, disparate systems, or a single EHR that can somehow cater to departments as and when they need department-level functionality? Standards that can aid in integration are also important - XML based and/or HL-7 based.

Minor essential revisions

1. A number of references have been left blank in the text of the manuscript - e.g. page 2 second paragraph; page 15 second paragraph. The authors should check the entire text and correct these.

2. A number of typos and syntax errors were identified - e.g. abstract results (The CDSs occupied roles that are complementary to those of the EHR system AND contained more structured patient data). A full search for such typos needs to be completed, and the text amended before resubmission.

3. References: #2 - check accuracy
**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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