Reviewer's report

Title: An interdisciplinary team communication framework and its application to healthcare ‘e-teams’ systems design

Version: 1 Date: 10 February 2009

Reviewer: Martin Dawes

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
Yes- they propose to develop a theoretical communication network for interdisciplinary health care professionals

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
They use an approach that might start the process but certainly will not answer their question. They only use one problem, palliative care, they did not use a wider validation of their findings using Delphi and so at this stage really have developed a hypothesis for a framework.

3. Are the data sound?
Yes and no – their collection methods were very clearly described, but their analysis was very unclear. There was no description of how concepts were obtained and validated within their research group. Did one or two or three people independently develop the concepts from reviewing the collected materials? What was the exact process?

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
No – the data and methods do not support the proposal for a framework other than for further validation and only as a hypothesis. One intense study of a single group does allow hypothesis development but now these frameworks (there should be more than one) need to be tested more in other settings and with a larger group. To leap from this framework to electronic systems is not appropriate. Finally there is no mention of how any such system might improve health outcomes in a measurable way.

Statements such as “Decisions within palliative care team meetings are largely data driven and thus there is the need for accurate and up-to-date data to support team function” are not supported by your findings. I would be surprised if decisions were not equally based on ethics, availability of resources, experience and opinion.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
Yes – but while acknowledging the restriction to palliative care they make the statement that they believe the model will apply to other areas without any justification or rationale.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
Not really

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Not really

9. Is the writing acceptable?
Yes

- **Major Compulsory Revisions** (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

  This should be redrafted as a hypothesis generating article. While it is possible to make inferences on how IT communication strategies might respond to this hypothetical framework it is not primarily an Informatics paper.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**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