Author's response to reviews

Title: Barriers and facilitators to the implementation of clinical practice guidelines: A cross-sectional survey among physicians in Estonia

Authors:

Pille Taba (Pille.Taba@kliinikum.ee)
Marika Rosenthal (Marika.Rosenthal@kliinikum.ee)
Jarno Habicht (HabichtJ@euro.who.int)
Helvi Tarien (Helvi.Tarien@haigekassa.ee)
Mari Mathiesen (Mari.Mathiesen@haigekassa.ee)
Suzanne Hill (suzannerhill@gmail.com)
Lisa Bero (berol@pharmacy.ucsf.edu)

Version: 3 Date: 14 November 2012

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Professor Sean Berenholtz

Thank you very much for peer review of our manuscript. We have revised the manuscript in light of the reviewer’s comments and made required changes (revised version of the paper is uploaded).

Please find the responses to the reviewers’ comments and questions:

**Reviewer's report 1:**

The authors have now provided a table showing the differences between hospital based physicians and family doctors in experiencing barriers. In the result section it is stated that 135 persons were family doctors, so why does the table only include 106? There are differences between the groups, could that be due to the specialist education varying in length?

*Response: Of the 497 respondents, 285 (57%) worked only in hospitals (among them, 131 in the Tartu University Hospital), and 135 (27%) only in outpatient clinics as family doctors (106) or other specialists (29 doctors), and 77 (16%) in both types of settings. In table 3, we have analyzed differences between family doctors (106) and hospital doctors (285) that are homogenous groups by their work style and schedule, and characteristic barriers. The explanation has been added in the text of the article. The differences cannot be due to length of specialist education as it varies only in one year, being 11 years including undergraduate studies and specialization for surgical specialties and 10 years for all other specialties, but more due to different work style requiring fast decisions in outpatient clinic and enough time for searching information in inpatient clinic.*

Nothing is said about the results from table 3 in the discussion. Most likely the results influence the implementation process.

*Response: Aspects related to results from table 3 have been added to the discussion.*
Still there is a problem with the low response rate. Only some of the physicians in Estonia attend the courses and only a small sub sample participated in the study.

Response: The sample size in the survey was 497 respondents that covers more than 10% of the doctors working in Estonia that represents the national sample of Estonian physicians. However, the study group represents more active part of physicians that has been discussed among limitations of the study.

Reviewer's report 2:
Minor essential comments

1 The authors reported a variation in the format and quality of the guidelines that were developed following different approaches. The statement “Treatment guidelines are evidence-based” is a little weird as an attitude statement given the context that it is just a fact that not all guidelines are evidence-based. Maybe another English translation could correspond better to the original meaning of that statement??

Response: We provided declarative statements on our survey and asked the respondents whether they agree with them or not. Therefore, ‘treatment guidelines are evidence-based’ is a declarative statement and the respondent may or may not agree with that. In fact, some did not and this is a barrier to their use.

2 Information about the validation process could be a surplus

Response: Our questionnaire was developed based on a valid instrument that has been included in the Methods section (the Cabana survey we cite in the methods).

Sincerely yours,

Pille Taba MD, PhD
Marika Rosenthal, MSc

Department of Continuing Medical Education
University of Tartu
Puusepa 8
Tartu 51014
Estonia
e-mail: Pille.Taba@kliinikum.ee
Marika.Rosenthal@kliinikum.ee
tel +372 5189319