Reviewer's report

Title: Access to electronic health knowledge in five countries in Africa: a descriptive study

Version: Date: 4 April 2007

Reviewer: Ian Watt

Reviewer's report:

General

In investigating the reported use of on-line medical literature in low income countries the authors address an important issue. The paper is well structured and clearly written. I have only a small number of minor comments.

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

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Methods: The authors state that the four teaching hospitals were purposefully selected. It would be helpful to know what criteria guided their selection.

It is stated that individuals were physically handed the questionnaire. It would be interesting to know how they were returned (one implication of this method of delivery is that the survey "deliverer" waited until the questionnaire was completed).

Discussion: Some discussion on the representativeness or otherwise of the surveyed sites would be helpful.

Discussion of why the MRC laboratories in the Gambia achieve better results would be helpful (eg. is it purely because of better resources?)

Finally in the abstract it is stated in the conclusions that text books remain central to post-graduate doctor training. This may well be the case but little data is given in the paper to support this conclusion.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.