Author's response to reviews

Title: Can the feedback of patient assessments, brief training, or their combination, improve the interpersonal skills of primary care physicians? A systematic review

Authors:

Sudeh Cheraghi-Sohi (sudeh.cheraghi-sohi@manchester.ac.uk)
Peter Bower (peter.bower@manchester.ac.uk)

Version: 4 Date: 14 July 2008

Author's response to reviews: see over
Regarding point 3 (focus on physicians only), I could not find what has been changed in the manuscript as a response to this comment.

I have reproduced the response to the initial query (Only feedback to physicians was considered, but an increasing part of primary care is provided by nurses. Why was this focus chosen?).

I have now inserted the page numbers below to direct the reviewer to the revisions in the manuscript.

We acknowledge that there are other types of primary care providers as opposed to just physicians. We restricted our focus to primary care physicians as they still provide the majority of primary care contact to patients. In the revised manuscript we have now acknowledged that nurses are likely to play an increasing role in primary care and highlighted that future research will need to test the effectiveness of interventions in doctors and nurses to reflect the changes in care delivery (see page 18).

Regarding point 5, I remain a bit worried. If the presentation of the one study that I know could be improved, what does it mean for the other studies? Have the authors checked the accuracy of the data on the other studies as well? From my involvement in an editorial board in a Cochrane group I know that many errors are made in data-extraction from studies.

Referee 2 still has concerns about the data extraction. We accept his concerns because of the identification of a minor omission in the original submission. We have followed usual procedure in data extraction:

- two independent extractions
- discussion and identification of discrepancies
- development of a final agreed extraction

We have rechecked our data and note that the error identified was not due to a failure in this procedure, but stemmed from a failure to correctly transfer all the details in the final agreed extraction to the manuscript.

Having identified the cause of the error, the first author has now re-checked all the data extractions. This check has identified two further minor errors which have now been corrected and do not affect the analysis or the findings of the review. We are confident that the data included in the tables is now as accurate as possible. We thank the referee for raising this issue and helping us to reflect on our data extraction procedures and avoid future errors of this kind.

We hope the paper is now acceptable for publication and look forward to hearing from you soon.