Reviewer’s report

Title: Useful of a Thematic Network, on the Primary Healthcare: A controlled interventional study in a rural area.

Version: 1 Date: 28 June 2005

Reviewer: Enrique Seoane-Vazquez

Reviewer’s report:

General
Overall, I think it is a very interesting study in an area without previous published work. It gives a good idea of the potential use of the Internet to improve health care delivery in rural areas.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
Include p-values to determine if the different in results of the intervention and the control groups are statistically significant or not.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
The term "displacement because of disease" may be better represented by the term "referral to a hospital specialist."

The research question is implicitly stated in the study, but not adequately indicated in the objectives/goal section. The research question should include the following: The goal of the study is to analyze the effects of the thematic network UniNet in the following four outcomes of a primary care medicine practice in a rural area: patients referrals, number of hospital stays, use of low therapeutic utility drugs prescriptions, and generic drug prescribing.

The intervention program should include a comprehensive list of all different activities performed: E-mail, chat, mailing list, computer conference (include all of them).

Explain how the adjustment of UTB by active population/pensionist was done.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.