Reviewer's report

Title: Publication practices and standards: recommendations from GlaxoSmithKline Vaccines' author survey

Version: 2 Date: 11 April 2014

Reviewer: Adam Jacobs

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions:

None

Minor essential revisions:

The publication mentions that there was a protocol for the study, but the protocol is not provided. Good practice would dictate making it available as supplementary material.

Not all questions from the questionnaire have been reported (eg questions 35-38). Either all questions should be reported, or some explanation should be given of why the authors feel only partial reporting is appropriate.

The explanation of the sample size in the first paragraph of "Survey participants and conduct" section is confusing. It makes it sound as if some calculation was done which required 15% of 1300 authors for a large enough sample. However, it is not clear that that calculation was done. If it was done, it should be presented. If there was another reason for choosing 1300 authors as the sample size (for example if that was the entire population of authors that GSK Vaccines had worked with during the relevant period), then that should be stated explicitly.

The second paragraph of that section says "data were anonymised (apart from the respondents' email address)", which is contradictory. Data including email addresses cannot be considered anonymised. Presumably the authors mean that the data were kept confidential. This should be corrected, and methods for ensuring confidentiality should be described.

The section in the results entitled "Use of a secure web-based publication tracking tool" reads as if it has been copied directly from a sales brochure for the software. A more neutral description should be given.

The second paragraph of the discussion section discusses the response rate. Although it is true that it is within the norms for online surveys (and higher than many) it is still low enough that response bias is a serious risk, and this should be acknowledged more frankly.

Discretionary revisions:
The results section is very long. Readability could be greatly improved by cutting the text substantially and simply referring to the data presentations in the figures.

**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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I own and run a company, Dianthus Medical Limited, that provides professional medical writing services to pharmaceutical companies and other clinical researchers.