Reviewer's report

Title: Measures for assessing practice change in medical practitioners

Version: 1 Date: 26 May 2006

Reviewer: David Kuykendall

Reviewer's report:

General
The primary objective of the paper is to identify methods that have been used to evaluate the outcome of strategies for the dissemination and implementation of guidelines. Literature review was used. Several common outcomes were identified such as practitioner behavior, change in health status, and changes in knowledge/attitudes. Although these outcomes were identified, there is no discussion of the appropriateness of these measures, nor is it clear why documentation of commonly used methods is important.

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

1. In a study that catalogs outcome measures, it is important to define outcome measure. For example, in some studies knowledge change might be considered an outcome, while in other studies knowledge might be consider more of an intermediate variable that leads toward behavior change, and hence might not be measured. What are the implications for validity of frequency counts?

2. The manuscript would benefit from greater discussion of results implications and limitations. What are the specific challenges facing implementation researchers in selecting a measure? How does the information presented in the study inform the state of the science? Why is frequency of use important? Are there important measures that are under represented?

3. Description of common measures should be supplemented by some discussion of measure appropriateness. To use a statistical analogy, generally speaking the F-test is frequently used. Frequency provides no information about whether the F-test should be used. Similarly, I am not sure what I should do with information about frequency of outcomes measures. This needs to be articulated.

4. A tighter link should be established between the study’s contribution to the field, the primary objective, the study methodology, and limitations.

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

1. Add page numbers

2. The conclusion should be developed further. It is unclear how the study contributes toward the development of a common methodology for outcomes assessment.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Reject as not sufficiently sound

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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

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