Author's response to reviews

Title: The efficacy of computer reminders on external quality assessment for point-of-care testing in Danish general practice: Rationale and methodology for two randomised trials

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear editor,

We hereby resubmit our manuscript based on the initial comments. We have tried to address the concerns and upload two manuscripts. The first is the final manuscript and the second is a manuscript where it is possible to detect all the changes made from the initial manuscript. Below are our reply;

The Editor's comments:

- Before we send this out for peer review, the manuscript could be clarified further. Please use the CONSORT cluster RCT checklist as a guide to what else needs to be included, e.g. adjustment for clustering effects in sample size calculation and planned analysis. Once you complete the checklist, please upload it as an additional file of your manuscript.

OUR COMMENTS:

In the present study the (primary and secondary) outcomes are evaluated on the practice level, e.g. the number of split tests done over a four-month period. The randomization was done on the practice level as well. Hence, since both randomization and analysis are on practice level, there are no clusters and we do not have to account for clusters in the power calculations or the reporting of the study. We have not included this argument in the article, because it may confuse the reader. However, if you feel this would help the reader we will include the argument in the statistical section.
- I think it might save the reviewers and yourself a little time later if you clarify some further aspects of the manuscript. For example, it is not clear to the outside reader what exactly your main outcome measure is — and it therefore needs further description. You also mention ‘MEREDIF’ in the power calculation; is this an effect size?

OUR COMMENTS:

We fully agree and have clarified the power calculation.

- I’m not entirely sure I understand the intervention from the current description.

OUR COMMENTS:

We added two paragraphs in order to clarify the intervention.

- For trial B, I’m not absolutely certain that you will be able to demonstrate a legacy effect in the absence of contemporaneous control group. I might be wrong but you might wish to consider the justification for this point.

OUR COMMENTS:

We have discussed this aspect in detail with our statistical advisor, and he believes that it is possible to survey this aspect. However, we have omitted the legacy effect from study B and just described the cross over design.

- I would certainly agree that a qualitative study would represent a useful addition. However, I thought the qualitative study description lacked some essential detail that we’d normally expect in protocols for qualitative studies. You might just want to consider removing this part but referring to the fact that you will be conducting a qualitative study elsewhere in the text.

OUR COMMENTS:

We removed the description of the qualitative study from the method section and describe it in the discussion section.

We hope, that we have addressed all concerns, but do not hesitate to contact us.

Best wishes

Frans Boch Waldorff