Reviewer’s report

Title: SPECIALIST LINK AND PRIMARY CARE NETWORK CLINICAL PATHWAYS- A NEW APPROACH OF PATIENT REFERRAL: A CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY OF AWARENESS, UTILIZATION AND USABILITY AMONG FAMILY PHYSICIANS IN CALGARY

Version: 1 Date: 24 May 2019

Reviewer: Research Square Reviewer 1

Reviewer's report:

PEER REVIEWER ASSESSMENTS:

OBJECTIVE - Full research articles: is there a clear objective that addresses one or several testable research questions? (Brief or other article types: is there a clear objective?)
Yes - there is a clear objective

DESIGN - Is the current approach (including controls and analysis protocols) appropriate for the objective?
Yes - the approach is appropriate

EXECUTION - Are the experiments and analyses performed with sufficient technical rigor to allow confidence in the results?
Yes - experiments and analyses were performed appropriately

STATISTICS - Is the use of statistics in the manuscript appropriate?
Yes - appropriate statistical analyses have been used in the study

INTERPRETATION - Is the current interpretation/discussion of the results reasonable and not overstated?
Yes - the author's interpretation is reasonable

OVERALL MANUSCRIPT POTENTIAL - Has the author addressed your concerns sufficiently for you to now recommend the work as a technically sound contribution? If not, can further revisions be made to make the work technically sound?
Yes - current version is technically sound

PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS:

GENERAL COMMENTS: The authors have responded to each of the questions offered by the two reviewers. They have also modified the manuscript in line with their responses. This is an interesting article which provides descriptive information about Specialist LINK and Clinical Pathways. It supports the conclusion that such strategies offer one way to improve the physician-specialist referral process.
ADDITIONAL REQUESTS/SUGGESTIONS:
The conclusion recommends "investing more resources to increase awareness and utilization of PCN Clinical Pathways in rural areas"; however, the difference between urban and rural settings was said to be "not statistically significant" so I was unsure why this was the only recommendation offered. The conclusion section might also want to recommend that future studies try and engage the 60% of clinicians who did not respond or consider other ways of investigating awareness and uptake through use of existing user data.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

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3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

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