Author's response to reviews

Title: Development of a computerised decision aid for thrombolysis in acute stroke care

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Dear Editorial Team

Please find enclosed the following manuscript that we would like to be considered for publication in BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making: Development and Testing of a Computerised Decision Aid for Thrombolysis in Acute Stroke Care.

The manuscript reports on a structured development process used to design and test a computerised decision aid (COMPASS) to support (i) rapid patient-specific decision making about thrombolytic treatment; and (ii) communication of likely benefits and risks of thrombolysis to patients and relatives during the emergency period of stroke to facilitate informed consent and engagement of patients/relatives in shared decision making.

The manuscript presents the findings of interactive usability testing of an alpha prototype of the computerised decision aid outwith the clinical setting in order to understand how it could work in practice, which informed a subsequent a mixed methods feasibility study to establish the acceptability and usability of COMPASS in the actual acute stroke setting.

This is the first study to evaluate the acceptability and usability of a decision aid for stroke thrombolysis in the clinical setting. Our findings show that COMPASS has tangible benefits for acute stroke care and allows clinical decision-making about thrombolysis to be based on individual patient characteristics, and affords opportunities for enhanced communication with patients/relatives during the hyper-acute period of stroke. COMPASS also has potential as a clinical training aid.

With regard to the manuscript we can confirm that:
• It conforms to the style detailed in the instructions for authors
• All authors have read the final manuscript and agree with the content
• It has not previously been published, in whole or in part, or is up for consideration elsewhere.

The word count for the manuscript (excluding title page, abstract, competing interests, list of abbreviations, author contributions, acknowledgements, references, five figures, four tables, and three additional files) is 5,178 words.

To assist with peer-review, for a limited time the reviewers can access (in confidence) the latest internet-based version of COMPASS at the following URL:

dash2.ncl.ac.uk/web

Username: dashuser
Password: dash2012

Please do contact me if you require any further information

Yours sincerely,

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