Reviewer’s report

Title: Finnish physicians' stress related to information systems keeps increasing: A longitudinal three-wave survey study

Version: 0 Date: 16 May 2017

Reviewer: Ross Koppel

Reviewer's report:

This is a useful paper on an important topic. Generally well written and well structured.

My concerns are:

1. The authors should examine why those in leadership positions experienced more stress than others. Was it that the leaders were also getting pressure from the other clinicians…in addition to their own stress with using the EHR?

2. They authors say that the changing system was a source of stress. On the other hand, they also tell us the system may have improved over the time period. So, this is a double-edged sword. It would be helpful to understand this trade off better.

3. MOST IMPORTANT: The basic question asked is very sloppy -actually terrible -- because it has so many elements. They should have asked their question (pasted below) as three separate questions. Combining them was a very bad idea…and weakens their and our ability to understand the results. Here's the question:

"Stress related to information systems (SRIS) was measured with two items asking "How often have you been distracted, worried or stressed about (during the past half-year period) a) constantly changing information systems and b) difficult, poorly performing IT equipment / software." The items were rated on a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often) and higher scores indicate higher SRIS. A mean value of the two items was calculated and the the reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of this composite scale in the present sample was 0.84 in 2006, 0.84 in 2010, and 0.85 in 2015."
There are powerful differences among" distracted, worried or stressed;" and there are massive differences between: "a) constantly changing information systems and b) difficult, poorly performing IT equipment / software."

By combining these 5 (or more) questions into one, they have seriously detracted from the value of the work. A real pity. Nevertheless, the paper has an important message and offers useful insights.

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.
No

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