Author’s response to reviews

Title: Initial Development of Supportive Care Assessment, Prioritization and Recommendations for Kids (SPARK), a symptom screening and management application

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Author’s response to reviews:

Lillian Sung MD, PhD
Division of Haematology/Oncology
The Hospital for Sick Children
November 8, 2018

Dear Dr. Krüger,

We wish to thank you for your careful re-review of our manuscript entitled “Initial Development of Supportive Care Assessment, Prioritization and Recommendations for Kids (SPARK), a symptom screening and management application”.

The comments were very helpful. Please find below an itemized list of the comments and how they have been addressed in the manuscript. We hope that you will find these modifications satisfactory.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to further correspondence with your office.

Sincerely,

Lillian Sung, MD, Ph

Editor’s Comments:

1. Availability of Data and Materials: Thank you for providing an Availability of data and materials subheading in your Declarations section. Please describe where the raw data generated/analysed during your study can be found, if any is unaccounted for. If you wish to share the data through correspondence then please include the statement “The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on
reasonable request.” If you do not wish to share your data, please state this along with the reason.

Response: Thank you for your review. The following statement has been added to the availability of data and material section of the manuscript.

“The datasets used or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.”

2. Figures: Please can you clarify whether the graphics, such as the dog and patient icons, in the figures were specifically designed for the SPARK web-app, or if they were taken from other sources? If taken from another source please acknowledge the source in the figure legend, and if it is under copyright also state the written permission given to use and adapt it. If the above conditions are not met the graphic needs to be censored/removed. Please note the editors may request proof of permission at any time. Should you require an alternative source you may wish to try Wikimedia Commons:

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Response: The graphics, such as the dog and patient icons, were specifically designed for SSPedi and SPARK by our team and therefore not under copyright.

3. Article Type: We feel that your manuscript would be best suited to the 'Software' article type, so kindly request that you change the article type in the system. Furthermore, please ensure that your manuscript is formatted according to our guidelines for software articles by changing the 'Methods' heading to 'Implementation' and including a 'Availability and Requirements' section. Please see our submission guidelines here: https://bmcmedinformdecismak.biomedcentral.com/submission-guidelines/preparing-your-manuscript/software-article

Response: The manuscript has been formatted according to the guidelines for software articles.

4. Availability to other researchers: Software applications/tools must be freely available to any researcher wishing to use them for non-commercial purposes, without restrictions such as the need for a material transfer agreement. Because weblinks frequently become broken, BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making strongly recommends that all software
applications/tools are included with the submitted manuscript as additional files to ensure that the software will continue to be available. BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making recommends, but does not require, that the source code of the software should be made available under a suitable open-source license that will entitle other researchers to further develop and extend the software if they wish to do so. Typically, an archive of the source code of the current version of the software should be included with the submitted manuscript as a supplementary file. Since it is likely that the software will continue to be developed following publication, the manuscript should also include a link to the home page for the software project. For open source projects, we recommend that authors host their project with a recognized open-source repository such as bioinformatics.org or sourceforge.net

Response: We are committed to making these tools freely available once the research phase of SPARK is completed. Currently, SPARK is being evaluated in a randomized controlled trial sponsored by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Further, the patient data within SPARK currently is housed at The Hospital for Sick Children. This approach will not be feasible once the website has become publically available without notifications and modifications to protect patient privacy outside of the research setting. In addition, we anticipate that most healthcare institutions would want to house their patients’ data on their own server. Thus, we do not believe we are in a position yet to make the application publically available but are committed to doing so once the research is complete. However, in order to address this point, we have added a link to the home page for the project in “AVAILABILITY AND REQUIREMENTS”.

6. At this stage, please upload your manuscript as a single, final, clean version that does not contain any tracked changes, comments, highlights, strikethroughs or text in different colours. All relevant tables/figures/additional files should also be clean versions. Figures (and additional files) should remain uploaded as separate files.

Response: A clean version of the manuscript has been uploaded along with figures as separate files.

Reviewer Reports:

7. Amy Nguyen (Reviewer 1): Authors have adequately responded to my comments, and that of other Reviewers’ and the Editor.

Response: Thank you for your feedback.
8. Mohd Idzwan bin Mohd Salleh, Ph.D in Health Informatics (Reviewer 3): In general, the paper is good and has successfully addressed all the major comments required by the reviewers. The findings have an excellent number of new and important answers gathered from both qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the results are interesting and valid. More importantly, this paper has successfully contributed to the design of an innovative HIS product for earlier detection of cancer among children in efforts to reduce the rate of mortality and to increase the patient safety by most health institutions.

Response: Thank you for your feedback.