Reviewer’s report

Title: Are Austrian practitioners ready to use medical apps? Results of a validation study

Version: 0 Date: 11 Feb 2019

Reviewer: Ting Song

Reviewer's report:

This paper aims to obtain a comprehensive picture of the readiness to use medical apps from the perspective of Austrian practitioners. The paper is well written, easy to read and understand.

In order of manuscript

Abstract:

1. The aim is not well defined. The expression "… provides insights into current readiness and willingness" is too dim. Suggest redefining the exact aim (or research question) more clearly.

2. The process of conducting the research is not clear. More detailed information is needed. For example, when was this study conducted? How did you recruit participants?

Introduction:

1. The authors mentioned "smartphones equipped with these apps are useful tools for practicing evidence-based medicine", please give one example to further explain.

2. Why "Medical apps can help to address the explosion of scientific knowledge in the medical field by providing up-to-date information on e.g. new drugs and clinical guidelines"? How can patients distinguish the useful information from the explosion of scientific knowledge provided by multiple medical app? Please give an example.

3. "long waited" should be "long-waited".

4. Please provide references for "facilitate decision-making in clinical contexts, improve workflows, and reduce medical error rates".

5. Please provide references for "Despite their abundant use".
6. The significance of this study is not clear. In the second paragraph, the authors list a lot of data about medical app use in different countries. But what are the results of using these apps? From the doctor's perspective, is there any evidence that using apps to communicate leads to better health outcomes for patients than using traditional ways of communication? In addition, what are the significances and benefits of knowing whether Austrian doctors are willing to use medical apps? Please further explain.

Methods:

1. In the "Study design" part, the holistic picture of the design is not clear. The readers still don't know how the study worked and what the process was. This part only describes the development of the survey instrument "PRAT".

2. The authors mentioned "purposive sample of Austrian medical doctors", please provide your purposed sample size? How did you get this figure?

3. What the inclusion criteria for the recruitment of the study participants?

4. "The main part of the questionnaire consisted of 17 PRAT items …", please tell the readers which table they can refer to.

5. Please confirm if "between 60 and 80" means "60≤a≤80".

6. Please provide a flow chart so that the readers can understand the whole study process more clearly.

Results:

1. Why "age" is not listed in Table 1 as one of the important socio-demographic characteristics?

2. Why is the East Austria singled out for comparison with the Rest of Austria? Is there anything special about the eastern region?

3. In terms of app use frequency, is there any quantified criteria? For example, how to distinguish "frequent users" and "several times a day"?
4. For the question "How often do you use medical apps during every-day clinical routine?", why a doctor can choose more than one answer?

5. "revealing a four factor structure of the…” should be "revealing a four-factor structure of the…”.

6. "we did not limit the maximum amount of factors" should be "we did not limit the maximum number of factors".

Discussion:

1. Please explain the results among three different types of readiness. This point is very important for the future of mHealth apps and adoption issues. To the extent that you can make recommendations based on your findings, that needs to be clearer.

2. Please think about the structure and logic of the discussion part. The content should correspond to the results part, and also reflect back to the introduction part to answer the research question.

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

No

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

Unable to assess

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 recommend additional statistical review
Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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