Reviewer’s report

Title: Merits, features, and desiderata to be considered when developing electronic health records with embedded clinical decision support systems in Palestinian hospitals: a consensus study

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Reviewer: Habibollah Pirnejad

Reviewer's report:

The topic is of importance and the authors conducted a comprehensive research on the topic. However, there are some major concerns as well as minor ones that have to be addressed before any decision making. The comments are as follows:

In the abstract, result section: Please order the result based on the prevalence. We expect the most important findings presented in the result and presenting general finding as such is not very informative for a reader.

Introduction:

We expect explanation that tells the reader how problematic would be if safety concerns were not considered in design and implementation of information technology application in healthcare settings. The second paragraph of the intro is actually part of methodology. And the authors can bring it under the study context subtopic. The topic sentence of the last paragraph is not related to the remaining part of the paragraph. Please improve it.

Methods:

There is a lot of wordiness in some part of the paper and paper can benefit from summarizing and removing some unnecessary parts. For example: a lot explanation presented about Delphi technique but it was not stated what the items upon which they wanted to make consensus were. I would suggest first to shorten this section and then bring the literature review part before the Delphi section.

This sentence was repeated too many times throughout the paper: "the objective of this study was to develop and achieve formal consensus on important items to be considered when planning for, designing, developing, implementing, piloting, evaluating, maintaining, upgrading, and/or using EHRs with CDSSs". It is recommended that it is replaced by simple statement such as "the objectives of this study" after it was made clear what the study objectives' details were.

The methodology section, Literature review subsection: Was the literature review systemic or non systemic? And why the authors decided to do that? In case it is systematic LR then the
authors have to provide details such as search strategy, etc. This part is more general as it stands now. The authors have to present their inclusion and exclusion criteria as well and a flowchart that shows how the process performed. How concepts from the selected literature were extracted? And so forth. Moreover, there are bunch of gray literature about the standard features that an HER should contain. International Organization for Standardization (ISO), for example, initiated efforts to address this requirement and published ISO/TS 18308.

The methodology section, the interview with … sub section: More explanations are required for those interviews. Were they face-to-face and one on one or in other forms? Were the interviews recorded? The interview data are not usually very organized and need to be interpreted or analyzed. The question is how the researchers draw the important safety features from the interviews without transcribing and interpreting the interview data?

What is the reason behind using 5 point likert scale in second part of the questionnaire and 9 point likert scale in the third part of the questionnaire?

The sentence on line 33 page 8 can be combined with its previous paragraph.

The result section:

The number of the physicians, their specialty, as well as the number of IT/programing specialists should be presented. Physicians are the key informants about patient safety and their involvement is highly valued comparing to other group of participants. However, other care providers such as nurses and pharmacists have also critical roles in both patient safety and using EHR in providing patient care. Why this study did not include those key role players.

"items were related to the patient's body characteristics” please make this statement clearer.

Discussion and conclusion: Providing a list of characteristics for a HER with CDSS does not provide much adding value. The authors, in the context of their methodology, (especially using AHP) were expected to tell the readers what are for example top ten safety characteristics for the study objectives. They also should explain what are the adding value, their study is going to add to the existing body of knowledge, for example to what was presented as ISO/TS 18308 standard. Conclusion is too general too.

References:

Please review the standard format and improve them based on the journal's format. For example, it is not clear what kind of literature is ref. no 9? Is it an online source? then the format has to be standard too.

Format of the journals' name has to be standard and consistent too. We have "Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association : JAMIA" and "J Am Med Inform Assoc" for the same journal.
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.

No

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

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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