Author’s response to reviews

Title: MULTI-CRITERIA ANALYSIS IN THE HEALTH AREA: SELECTION OF THE MOST APPROPRIATE TRIAGE SYSTEM FOR THE EMERGENCY CARE UNITS IN NATAL.

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A. Cuff
Editor
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Ref.: Paper: “MULTICRITERARY ANALYSIS IN THE HEALTH AREA: SELECTION OF THE MOST APPROPRIATE TRIAGE SYSTEM FOR THE EMERGENCY CARE UNITS IN NATAL”.


Dear Prof. A. Cuff,

Thank you very much for your careful review and constructive suggestions regarding our manuscript. Those comments were quite valuable for us to revise it and improve its quality.

As a result of that, we would like to re-submit the manuscript to the BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making.
A detailed response to all comments made by the Referee can be found below. Have you any further queries; please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours Sincerely

D. G. G. Camilo
Correspondent author

Scott Levin (Reviewer 1)

Question 1: What is the contribution to the scientific literature?
Answer 1: On analysing the manuscript, we came to the conclusion that it did not really make clear its relevance; thus, we add three new paragraphs to explain further.

Page 4, line 70-72.

“The city on the study has four UPAs and all were included in the research; furthermore, those UPAs do not have any structured protocol set in their units, causing bottlenecks and screening breakdowns, rendering the overall health system inefficient.”

Page 4, line 75-78.

“On the whole, the present study proposes a new application of multicriteria decision analysis in healthcare systems; for no research using MCDA was found to assist the decision making process of choosing the best screening protocol.”

Page 4, line 79-82.

“It is noteworthy that studies like the present one – with little or no monetary investment for research, carried out in small units with an excess demand – represent a very common situation in the poorest and most disadvantaged countries, thus increasing its replicability and usefulness.”

Question 2: What citations were used to create Table 1?
Answer 2: In order to address this question, a new sentence was written before Table 1, which shows several researches in the relevant areas, adding the references of fourteen researches analysed.

Page 7, lines 145-147.

“In order to develop the table, the present paper used several researches and studies on the five protocols (Figure 1), as to find out if they bring out concepts and insights on the subcriteria and criteria used in the present research. (20–33).”

References:


Fiona Lecky (Reviewer 2)

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Question 1: Table 1, Figure 1 and Figure 2 are never mentioned in the text..

Answer 1: All tables and figures were cited in the text; nonetheless, as to highlight their importance in the article we have added further comments.

Table 1: Page 7, lines 144-145.

“Thus, Table 1 was put together, showing the relationship between the protocols studied and the criteria and subcriteria used in the research.”

Page 8, line 152.

“Table 1 consists of four criteria: (a) Guideline evaluates the presence of treatment…”

Figure 1: Page 7, line 139-140.

“…and the Spanish Triage System (SET) (Figure 1)…”

Page 7, line 146.

“…the five protocols (Figure 1), as to find out if they bring out concepts and insights…”

Figure 2: Page 11, lines 229-230.
“…the FITradeoff application (Figure 2).”

Page 12, line 231.

“In Figure 2, the data collection process can be described …”

Question 2: All specialists are men in Brazil?

Answer 2: This is a translation issue, in Brazil we normally do not identify the subject as male or female, formally using the male pronouns, thus causing the confusion in situations like this.

Hence, to adapt the text, he was replaced by “s / he” when referring to the specialists.

Question 3: The text suggests that the expert does not know the screening process, and that his position in the decision is inferior to those who perform the screening daily.

Answer 3: We agree with the reviewer's position, the text did not make clear the real knowledge of the expert in the area of screening nor his experience in the process. To address this issue a new paragraph has been added:

Page 16, Lines 323-327.

“It is important to point out that the research specialist works in one of the four UPA units, and has worked for many years in the triage process, from large hospitals and UPAs units. S/He has done specializations and studies in the triage area, and has knowledge of protocols such as the ones experienced at the units. Hence, s/he was considered by the authors and the final decision makers to be able to perform the role of specialist in the present research.”

Question 4: The meaning of the criteria used is unclear.

Answer 4: In order to address this question, a new paragraph has been created explaining the four criteria of the research.

Page 8, lines 152-157.

“Table 1 consists of four criteria: (a) Guideline evaluates the presence of treatment and evaluation instructions for different types of patients; (b) Ease of Evaluation assesses the presence of indicators that facilitate a patient assessment by nurses; (c) Ease of Use evaluates characteristics that will facilitate the use and control of protocols in the daily routine of the units;
and (d) Ease of Implementation assesses how simple a protocol implementation will be according to the characteristics of the units.”

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