Reviewer's report

Title: Drivers of telemedicine use. Comparative evidence from samples of Spanish, Colombian and Bolivian physicians

Version: 1 Date: 27 November 2013

Reviewer: Michael Rigby

Reviewer's report:

I find the pre-set review categories not helpful. I think this paper would increase to being fully eligible for publication if revisions are made. I think some of the small revisions are more important than bigger ones.

There are few comparative studies on telehealth uptake across countries, so this paper could be important in addressing that gap. However, at present the paper is like a poor man’s sandwich - the start and finish are robust, but the filling - methods and results - which should be nutritious is thin and poorly developed.

The literature review is good.

Essential revisions

1. The first line of the abstract is not relevant, in that telehealth impact is not discussed in the paper. This sentence in this position could mislead potential readers.

2. At the foot of page 3, the lack of empirical evidence about telehealth impact is correctly raised, but it is not addressed elsewhere. The study does not appear to ascertain if this lack of evidence is a factor in low uptake.

3. The authors state nothing about the health systems in the three countries, and their degree of development. Unless the three systems are similar, including their level of staffing, and urban / rural divides, then this may also be a determining factor.

4. We are not shown the questionnaire, how long it was, and whether paper-based, digital, or on line.

5. Page 8 states there are three blocks of questions, and lists four blocks.

6. We are not told the response rates, nor whether the respondents were a representative sample, e.g. by age, gender, type of practice.

7. Are the specialties of the doctors in the three countries similar? There is much more relevance to telemedicine in some specialties than others.

8. We do not know how Optimism, and other key attributes analysed, were measured.
9. In the consideration of Preliminary Evidence, as we do not know the nature and state of development of the health system in each country, we do not know whether factors such as physician shortage or rural isolation were significant when compared with Spain.

10. It would have been good to obtain respondents’ views as to enabling factors and blocking factors to telemedicine use.

Minor points

11. Given the three members of CICUS, an explanation of why Colombia rather than Ecuador was chosen as the third country in the study would be helpful.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.