

## Reviewer's report

**Title:** Community nursing needs more silver surfers: a questionnaire survey of primary care nurses' use of information technology (IT).

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 10 June 2004

**Reviewer:** Peter Griffiths

### Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. In presenting the results the claim is made that 'due to the small sample size they (the trends noted in access to PCs - table 1) are not statistically significant. A similar claim is made regarding a trend observed in the data in table 5. This is incorrect it implies that you know what the result would be if the sample was larger which of course you don't - if you did you wouldn't need larger samples. Rather simply there was a trend (as described) but it was not statistically significant. The discussion can deal with the importance and substance of such trends in the light of the pattern of results observed and can make recommendations for further research to make up for the small sample here.

2. The p values of statistical tests are not reported consistently. I would suggest that in all cases where a significance test is reported that the exact p value be given in order that the validity of conclusions and the strength of the claim can be assessed by the reader. Certainly you should be consistent in reporting with some p values given and some not.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. The interest in this paper could be international - UK specific terms should be used with an eye to an overseas reader who might need to be told that it is the UK's National Health Service that is doing this investment and require an explanation of where Sussex might be found and what a PCT is!

2. In the abstract, the sample size should ideally be specified.

3. Although a link is given to the questionnaire a thumbnail description of it (in terms of content as well as format) would aid the reader.

4. A typology of categories of respondents is identified (end of methods section) but it is rather confusing and does not seem to be used (certainly not consistently) when describing results which refer to more commonly recognised professional groupings (practice nurse, and HVs and midwives

and others. Certainly CPNs would meet the definition of district nurse given as would midwives and HVs.

5. The implication of the study (as given) is that community nursing (sic) needs more 'silver surfers'. In this you seem to equate use of the internet and use of an EPR. It's a good line but the two are not synonymous - all resources but the EPR in particular will require much more than generic web skills.

6. Your discussion makes it clear that there is a close relationship between this study and other work done by members of this research group. This paper would be more valuable if it were set clearly in the context of this past work. Instead it feels as if the introduction hedges around it in order to justify its own existence.

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No