

Reviewer's report

Title: Use of and attitudes to a hospital information system by medical secretaries, nurses and physicians deprived of the paper-based medical record. A case report.

Version: 1 **Date:** 16 October 2003

Reviewer: Dean Sittig

Reviewer's report:

General

This is an interesting report on the attitudes of medical secretaries, nurses and physicians to an HIS. The study was well conducted. The rate of return for the questionnaires was excellent (>73% for all groups!). They found that RN's and Medical secretaries liked the system much more than docs!

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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

Authors should have a native English speaker go over the manuscript for minor english grammar and word choice revisions. For example, in the abstract we would say paperless rather than paper-deprived to describe an HIS. There are numerous other places where minor corrections would make the manuscript much easier to read. I could do this following the next revision if no one else is available.

I think you need an hypothesis to help explain the different tasks that the various parties are using the system for. I believe that such a hypothesis could help explain the differences in user satisfaction and overall use. For example, I think I can understand why the medical secretaries found the scanned images so great and the physicians found them hard to read. The secretaries only had to find the documents and perhaps check the patient's name or record number while the clinicians had to actually read the documents and understand the content. I personally hate to read scanned documents on the screen. I see on page 8 that you begin to go into this type of explanation, but think you should probe a bit deeper. This is the key to the entire paper in my estimation.

Finally, while the graphs look great in color on the screen, they were virtually unintelligible when printed in black and white. Perhaps you need a printed version of the graphs. I really like the blue / red on the screen, but it doesn't translate well. not sure how to fix this. Perhaps a note that these graphs are best viewed when printed in color!

What next?: Accept after minor compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

None