Reviewer's report

Title: Implementing and Evaluating Attitudes towards Inter-hospital Electronic Patient Records Exchange: Discrepancies among Physicians, Medical Record Staff, and Patients

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Reviewer: Stuart Speedie

Reviewer's report:

The authors have submitted a manuscript that reports the results of a survey of physician, medical records personnel and patient attitudes toward certain aspects of electronic records including privacy protection and information exchange between systems. They use the lens of Venkatesh’s UTAUT model to build an analytic model to determine factors that might predictive of these attitudes. The manuscript also cites and briefly describes and electronic patient record based on the Taiwan electronic Medical record Template and implemented at a case hospital. That system is capable of exchanging clinical information with other systems to support patient care.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. The manuscript demonstrates a discrepancy between its overall goals and what it reports in terms of data and results. In particular the Methods describe the design and implementation of an EPR with accompanying diagrams but there is no apparent link between this more technical description and the survey that was conducted other than that the system was implements at the hospital where the physicians and MRS personnel worked. The focus of the analyses is on two general questions on the survey relating to protecting patient privacy and exchanging information between hospital. The description of the system adds little to the understanding of the survey results and it is recommended that it be dropped from the paper or tied much more closely to the survey.

2. This paper could represent a contribution to the literature if it just focused on the survey results. This however would require a change in title to reflect the attitudes toward privacy protection and information exchange.

3. The authors claim that the survey that was developed is derived from Venkatesh’s UTAUT model and that the central survey questions represent the Behavioral Intention component of that model. Venkatesh defines Behavioral intention as “The degree to which a person has formulated conscious plans to perform or not perform some specified future behavior.” Neither of the central survey questions appears to fit this definition. The authors should explain clearly how these questions fit this definition or drop the use of the UTAUT model. These results could be presented and discussed just as well without that model as the questions about Privacy and information exchange have meaning separate from the UTAUT model.
4. Methods, pg 9: It is evident from Tables 3 and 4 that the survey consisted of more that the 25 questions reported. The complete list of questions needs to be described and descriptive statistics reported including those related to Human Aspects and Technology Aspects.

5. The use of factor analysis is confusing – both in what it intends to accomplish and how its results were used. It is normally expected that if such an analysis is performed its results are reported in a factor loading table. In addition the text refers on page 10 to three components that could be summated but there is no evidence that such factor scores were ever generated or used in the analyses except as labels associated with certain questions.

6. Page 13: Subjects: The manuscript states that the study randomly selected the respondents and then gives a list of three scenarios. It is not obvious how random selection was conducted within these scenarios. A more detailed description if the selection process is required. In addition the “patient” group included persons from two government organizations, two private companies and one university. What was the rationale for including these latter groups since it was not evident that they were either patients of the hospital or had any exposure to the EPR as the first two groups did?

7. Page 22, Discussion: The results section reports a relatively large number of statistically significant differences of various types. Yet the discussion is limited to only differences between the three respondent groups. The Results section in many cases simply points out that differences exist but does not attempt to interpret them. This is acceptable as long as those differences are addressed in the Discussion section. This does not appear to be the case. The Discussion of the reported results needs to be greatly expanded to address the differences reported.

8. The relevance of Sections 4.2 through 4.4 to the results of the survey appears to be minimal. These need to be either removed or tied much more closely to the reported results.

9. Pg 26, line 16 – The comments about doctor shopping are a gratuitous interpretation of the results and disparaging of patients. It could well be that these patients are more concerned that their doctors have complete information about their medical conditions and know the importance of this for their care.

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

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interests.