

Reviewer's report

Title: What are the roles involved in establishing and maintaining informational continuity of care within family practice? A systematic review

Version: 1 **Date:** 21 August 2008

Reviewer: Ronda Hughes

Reviewer's report:

Major essential revisions:

One of the challenges in doing systematic reviews is the selection of the key words. In this manuscript, the focus was on physicians and not other clinicians that do provide care in outpatient/family practice/primary care settings.

In terms of background, it does not appear that the early work of Barbara Starfield and the Institute of Medicine on primary care as well as the impact of managed care/gatekeepers, and important component of which is continuity of care, were included to emphasize the history and scarcity of research in this area over the past 20 years.

Another concept that was mentioned was patient-centered care – which is an inherent component of continuity of care, and where research that was most likely not included in this review (based on the selected key words used) can also be found to add more evidence to the goal of this manuscript to focus on the interaction of the roles of clinicians and patients/families.

“Future Research” section - While assessing family caregivers may have been the initial objective, it does not need to be stated in this manuscript. Review of the literature for family caregivers has been done elsewhere (see for example, www.ahrq.gov/qual/nurseshdbk/docs/ReinhardS_FCCA.pdf), while the essential thrust of this manuscript would need to focus on one (e.g., physicians/clinicians) or the other (e.g., patients and family caregivers) or the effectiveness of the relationship between the two. The main focus here is the incredible research gaps to inform clinicians in family practices (e.g., physicians, nurses, physician assistants, etc.) to improve patient outcomes or better chronic disease management through ensuring and fostering continuity of care.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.