Reviewer's report

Title: Are they really refusing to travel? A qualitative study of prehospital records

Version: 2 Date: 22 August 2006

Reviewer: Helen Snooks

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)

Review: Are patients really refusing to travel?

This paper is now improved, although some further minor work is required before publication

Minor: abstract results remove 'including' (used twice in same sentence)

Background: First sentence – is this in the UK and if so, is this the right reference? In general in the background, the source of references should be made clearer – many of these are not UK and may or may not be transferable to the UK context
Last para correct: ‘this study sought using…’

Results

Don’t repeat data from sample selection – but do give the numbers for the sampled month.

RTT calls cost £1.45 million – do you assume that this is all a wasted resource? There seems to be an assumption here that if the patient is not taken to hospital then the ambulance service offers nothing.

Need to always be clear that this info is from crew documentation – reasons given by patients – as recorded by crews. This is a criticism I mad last time which has not been fully addressed. The crews cannot be assumed to always be truthful about reasons for non-conveyance in a situation where they are do not actually have protocols to make decisions to leave people at scene, but in reality do just that. this should be acknowledged, explained clearly to a generalist readership and maybe be included in the discussion

Discussion

Could be better structured

'Reported anecdotally' – where/how?

It is difficult to see how inclusion of the question: does the patient know about the call? could help in this situation – what would the dispatcher do if the answer were to be no? I owuld recommend deleting this paragraph

Overall – need to be clearer about whether the study aims to be relevant to UK or international context

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests