Reviewer's report

Title: What about N? A systematic review of sample-size reporting in focus group studies

Version: 1 Date: 13 December 2010

Reviewer: Heidi Lempp

Reviewer's report:

This is a very important paper for qualitative researchers and I congratulate the authors for their detailed work, I found the paper very interesting and relevant to qualitative health service research.

I would like to make a number of suggestions for discretionary revisions that may improve the paper:

1) I found the title misleading, as I assumed that the content related to number of participants only in focus groups but the author also assessed the number of focus groups and how this decision was made by the authors. Could both study objectives be specifically reflected in the second half of the title?

2) It may be useful to also include positive comments about the focus group methodology in the background section, to achieve a more balanced review?

3) For readers who are unfamiliar with the focus group method, I suggest to insert a few paragraphs when the focus groups are used in health service research and its characteristics, e.g. standardised questions etc.

4) When looking at the list of journals you used for the literature review, I did find the alphabetical listing not very helpful. Could you divide the list of journals in categories, e.g. according to speciality: medicine, nursing, public health, education etc., as this would provide additional useful information.

Dr. Heidi Lempp
13/12/10

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests