Reviewer's report

Title: "Do I really want to do this?" Longitudinal cohort study participants’ perspectives on postal survey design: a qualitative study

Version: 1 Date: 4 October 2010

Reviewer: Pål Gulbrandsen

Reviewer's report:

This paper represent a serious attempt to understand what people think about surveys, including why they responded. But, as is often the case with much research - including some that I have conducted and published myself - the results are no surprise and it is questionable whether they merit a full publication in a journal. The MSD specific findings merit some limited interest in the field of surveys about MSD and functional assessments.

I suspect most of the general findings reported here are common knowledge in commercial companies doing surveys even if published papers on the issue are scarce. What everyone wants to know is of course what they think who do not respond to surveys, but for obvious reasons these people's thoughts are hard to explore. That said, given the policy of BMC Research Methodology, it looks as if this study was done in a sound way and hence could be published here.

I would have liked to read about the size of the survey questionnaire earlier, in the beginning of the Methods section when the survey is described. I also would like to have seen the authors make an effort to discuss the strong gender bias in participation.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.