Reviewer’s report

Title: Recruiting and retaining GPs and patients in intervention studies: The DEPS-GP project as a case study

Version: 1 Date: 1 July 2007

Reviewer: Larry Green

Reviewer’s report:

General

This manuscript capitalizes on a trial to examine important issues of recruitment and retention of family physicians in research studies conducted within their practices/with their patients. It is a methods paper that adds to a growing body of literature about what it takes to engage family physicians in practice-based research and augments why family physicians start and stop doing studies. It is in part a case study and in part a qualitative study with methods sufficient to believe the reported findings about recruitment and retention. As a methods paper, it could be briefer, and it might be positioned (1) as evidence needed to continue to move the research enterprise into frontline practice and (2) suggestions/guides for those doing so.

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. Please explain what comprised "every effort" made to make the task as easy as possible and "proactive personal contact?" What was the rate of postal questionnaires not useable because of incorrect address, different doctor, being deceased? These details can be very helpful to others designing and implementing research in family physician's offices and would make this manuscript even more useful.

2. Please emphasize in the discussion, possibly in the first paragraph, exactly what was learned about the methods used to recruit and retain family physicians and why these lessons are important to others conducting research in family physicians’ practices. Consider bringing most important lessons into abstract and especially the conclusion.

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. Help international readers know a couple of terms. What are "flow on" effects and what is "beyondblue?"
2. Please address: Are a 25% interest rate in research and a 3% participation rate at time of survey actually low rates?? Compared to what expectation or experience in other fields?

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Style issues: Can't this manuscript be shortened by staying focused on the key lessons learned about the methods, to the benefit of readers? Do you want to stick with past tense when developing the background information?

Are the results for this methods paper the response rates in the DEPS-GP study-or-what was learned about recruitment and retention of family physicians?

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.