Reviewer’s report

Title: Research activity and capacity in primary healthcare: The REACH study: A survey

Version: 3 Date: 12 December 2008

Reviewer: Deborah Graham

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This manuscript assesses the level of research activity and capacity for research among primary healthcare professionals.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1 – Page 2 (Background) and Page 3 (Background): It is unclear if the authors feel that the level of engagement of primary healthcare professionals with research remains poor in Ireland or in the UK, or if this is a universal problem. If universal, include additional references.

2 – Page 5, lines 12-13: The authors state that the baseline characteristics of study participants were analyzed with 1-way ANOVA and chi-square. It is unclear in terms of what variable(s) these baseline characteristics were analyzed – professional group? Anything else?

3 – Page 6, Results, line 13: Should the public health doctors be grouped with the GPs rather than with other HSE staff? If no, why not?

4 - Page 11 – Last paragraph: Clarify that there is no information about non-responder practicing nurses. An additional limitation is that the authors were not able to include in the study other primary health care professionals in the community.

5 – Page 12, line 11: Although the authors refer to international literature, in fact it is UK literature.

6 – Figure 3: Title should read “Box plot of R&D Culture Index Score by Professional Group.” Box width, mean symbol, and other aspects of figure should be clearly explained in footnotes.

7 – Figure 4 should include Presenter of research conference paper also, as it is a covariate in the final tree regression model.

Minor Essential Revisions

1 – Page 3, line 6: “In addition, …”

2 – Page 3, line 8: “an increase in the quality of care provided…”

3 – Page 3, line 17: “Holland, …”
Methods, first line of 2nd paragraph: “The postal questionnaire used in the study consisted of three sections. Section A…”

Page 5, line 7: “five items that they perceive…”

Page 6, Results, line 9: “less. Only 12%…”

Page 6, Results, line 13: “…Figure 1.”

Page 6, Results, line 14: “of the study participants and R&D Index Score…”

Page 6, line 15: “predominantly male, working full-time, …”

Page 7, line 8: “(48%)”

Page 7, line 8: “there appeared to be both a high level of awareness of the influence of research on professional practice (83%) and a …”

Page 7, line 17: “ranking of the eighteen …”

Page 7, line 20: “relate to respondents’ …”

Page 9, paragraph 2: “The best regression model identified three significant explanatory variables which explained the dependence of R&D Culture Index score on the available covariates using both statistical approaches: research…”

Page 9, paragraph 2, line 7: “included ‘presenter of research conference paper’ rather…”

Page 9, 4th from the last line: “identify a nearly identical subset of useful explanatory variables, the possibility…”

Page 10, Discussion, line 10: “This may be due to factors discussed in this…”

Page 11, line 9: “opportunities, but only about half of the respondents…”

Page 12, line 17: “appear to be involved…”

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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.