Reviewer's report

Title: International challenges without borders: a descriptive study of family physicians’ educational needs in the field of diabetes

Version: 2 Date: 30 December 2010

Reviewer: Paul Van Royen

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions:
1. The results section is mixed with the discussion. Therefore it remains unclear which data could be retrieved from the literature search and the unpublished research data. The paper looses its research value. It is necessary that a separate discussion should reflect on the different results, integrate/compare them with other literature and propose actions to be taken to minimize barriers and gaps.

2. In fact this article aggregates research data from the co-authors. Some of these (DNAT and AXDEV) are partially quantitative, partially qualitative data. It seems that all data are simply aggregated and not really analyzed or synthesized. However this seems necessary since data are heterogeneous – (at least concerning the cultural differences and the different health systems context, as they are present in the four geographical areas studied).

In synthesizing the qualitative data, a meta-ethnographic analysis could/should be used (Noblit and Hare, Britten et al). This approach compares and analyzes texts, creating new interpretations in the process. In this interpretative approach, there is need to take into account the differences mentioned. For instance referral and integration within a team can have different meanings and so there is need for formulating new interpretations/secondary coding.


Minor Essential Revisions:
3. The research question could be formulated clearer. The authors have only mentioned the aim of this research: to describe and categorize gaps and barriers inherent to FP-GPs care of diabetes patients. But also related to the comments on analysis (see supra), the research questions could be focused more on the international comparison and relation to differences in culture and health care system.

4. Inclusion criteria for the systematic literature search are well described. However it is not clear how the selection and extraction procedure was organised
(assessment by more than one researcher, quality appraisal done, ....)

5. Table 1 is a synthesis of all data (the literature review, the qualitative and quantitative data). Authors should better describe how these very different data were aggregated of synthesized.

6. A consensus was developed for five gaps during a face-to-face meeting. Is this consensus procedure part of the whole research project- why isn’t it mentioned in the methods section?

**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