Reviewer's report

Title: Perceptions of the role of general practice and practical support measures for carers of stroke survivors: a qualitative study

Version: 2 Date: 28 March 2011

Reviewer: Janet Bray

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions

1. References need to be checked for completeness (e.g. McKeivit et al.–Stroke is misspelt)
2. In the background under the role of general practice and stroke carers the word “form” is meant to be “from”.

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

General comments:
I found the manuscript very difficult to read.
The sentences throughout were too long and often lacked commas. Example of long sentence 3rd last sentence of conclusion 68 words! -3 ideas (“Funding restrictions are likely to reduce services and already the Caring with Confidence scheme, seemingly the most popular practical support measure with participants here, is ending and is to be replaced with a training programme to raise GPs’ awareness of their role and contribution to supporting carers [28] but our evidence suggests that not only general practice teams but also carers are unclear about what carers can expect.”).

Introduction:
I’m not sure what you mean by “2.5 billion a year in informal care costs” –do you mean the savings made or the amount informal cares spend?

Methods:
Were interviews conducted face-to-face?
Were the interviews recorded and transcribed?
How long did interview take?
Were only English-speaking participants used?
Where did the study take place?
Could you provide the topic guide? Would be useful.
Why were administrative staff included?
Were the staff performing the content analysis experienced in this technique? Did you use NVIVO or similar software for data management?

Results:
1. I would like more information on the carers (age, did they live with the stroke survivor? If available) and demographics of the GP staff (age, gender).
2. It would be helpful to also provide the median time (and range) since stroke to give a better idea of the duration of time as carer.
3. Were there any differences in findings between those who had been a carer > 6 months compared to those < 6 months. May have different needs.
4. What does “self identify at registration” mean

Discussion
5. No discussion is given to the limitation of sampling method and its effect on the ability to generalise findings. One GP team interviewed –may not generalise. Did you include non-English speaking carers?

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

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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'