Reviewer's report

Title: Building an international network for a primary care research program: challenges and solutions in the set-up and delivery of a prospective observational study of acute cough in 13 European Countries

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Reviewer: Ruth G Jenkins

Reviewer's report:

I thank the authors for their thoughtful revision of the manuscript. I believe the lessons learned can provide valuable information to similar PCNs, not only in Europe but elsewhere.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

The manuscript still lacks details and clarity that would be necessary to be applicable to other PCNs. For example, the Methods section actually provides no methodology detail - the who, when, and how of the study. Some of that can be gleaned from the Results section content, but the authors should provide clear delineation of the methodology and results and more specifics. For example, the second paragraph of the Methods section states,

"The challenges/queries were then dealt with and disseminated to the wider PCNs immediately. It was important to ensure that the NNFs or NNCs did not feel isolated or ignored as this could have had a negative effect on their ability to deliver the study aims."

There are no specifics of how the challenges/queries were dealt with, who was responsible, when it occurred, etc. Define 'immediately'. The last sentence is more process opinion, not methods. How did the study insure that feelings of isolation were addressed, when did that occur, by whom, and how? How do you know you were successful? Also, how were your data collected, by whom, over what time period -- was it by surveys, on-line or paper-based, key informant interviews, focus groups?

Think of it this way - what would a researcher need to know to repeat your study? Write to delineate the steps necessary, what personnel you would need, what data should you capture and how, how would it be analyzed, how long would it take? Then in the results, specify each finding from the steps of the methods.

I believe the researchers have much to offer the readers, but the manuscript still needs additional work.

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