Reviewer's report

Title: Perceived barriers to guideline adherence: a survey among general practitioners

Version: 1 Date: 23 April 2011

Reviewer: Jean-Francois Chenot

Reviewer's report:

Dear Authors,

this is a survey of perceived barriers to guideline adherence in general practice of 265 GPs in the Netherlands.

Major Compulsory Revisions.

Methods
Also there is long analysis section I have not understood how the data you present in table 3 was summarized. I understood that each participating GP rated a total of 10 key recommendations from NHG guidelines out of 16. So each GP rated on each item 10 times, e.g. lack of awareness for each recommendation. Was a mean calculated for each GP or where all (265 x 10) 2650 ratings added.

Results
The characteristics of the GPs participating in the survey are adequately described and compared to the national average. The response rate is acceptable for this kind of survey.

Table 3 is puzzling. Percentages usually refer to proportion and not to means. Are you presenting the proportion of physicians how rated that they strongly agree (you say so in the manuscript). You might want the change the title of table 3. I am not sure that table 3 is the best way to present your data. Presenting your data like you have done it in Figure 1 might be me more informative for the reader. The downsize is that you cannot see the range anymore. For example “lack of time” has huge range, ranging from 0,8 to 50% of physician identifying this issue as barrier for guideline adherence. So lack of time is not necessarily a barrier but for specific recommendations. In the background you are arguing that different aspects of guidelines may provoke varying barriers and therefore specific recommendations should be evaluated separately.

Since Online Journals have no limitation regarding length it would be possible to present all 16 Key recommendations, instead of the three recommendations you selected for detailed presentation in Box 1. You should provide the number of GPs for each item since I understood that not all key recommendations were rated by all GPs.

Discussion
Differences in perceived barriers for specific recommendations could be discussed in more detail.
The limitations of the study are adequately discussed.
The conclusions are rather a summary then an implication for practice or research based on the findings of this survey.

Discretionary Revisions

Literature
Reference 15 should have a translation in brackets for non-dutch speaking readers. It would also nice to provide a translation in English in brackets of references 16, 17, 18 and 20.

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