Reviewer's report

Title: Patient enablement requires physician empathy: a cross-sectional study of general practice consultations in areas of high and low socioeconomic deprivation in Scotland

Version: 1 Date: 6 December 2011

Reviewer: Sara Willems

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

The author must respond to these before a decision on publication can be reached. For example, additional necessary experiments or controls, statistical mistakes, errors in interpretation.

None

Minor Essential Revisions

The author can be trusted to make these. For example, missing labels on figures, the wrong use of a term, spelling mistakes.

1) Abstract + introduction

The first sentence is somewhat strange to start the abstract with. “Enablement” is essential in this study, yet this concept is not introduced in the abstract. I would suggest to replace the first sentence of the abstract with a sentence regarding enablement and its importance in the consultation.

Also in the introduction, enablement is introduced by referring to the use of the PEI. I would suggest to start saying that enablement can be used to evaluate the consultations and in order to do so, the PEI is a commonly used instrument.

2) Introduction:

I might be good to add some more information on how enablement differs from patient satisfaction as the latter is probably a well-known concept for the readers and enablement not.

3) Methods:

Although it is common to refer to previous papers for the detailed description of the methods, the paper would gain from some more information concerning the sampling procedure of practices and patients (in- and exclusion criteria for patients?). As this section is written now, the reader without prior knowledge about this study, is not able to evaluate the merits of this study well.
Discretionary Revisions

These are recommendations for improvement which the author can choose to ignore. For example clarifications, data that would be useful but not essential.

However I am not a native speaker I noticed some minor language things which seemed strange to me. Could you check them? Probably they are correct but you never know …

1) Methods, sampling frame
Delete the “.” before (36% in high deprivation …

2) Methods, patients
- should there be a , after (CARE Measure)?
- “if the patient was seeing their usual doctor.” Is “their” the correct word here?

3) Methods, patients
- “as previous decsrive” should be “as previous described”

4) Methods, patients
- delete the “,” before (70% high deprivation group …
- 70% in the high deprivation group (add in the), idem for low deprivation group

**Level of interest**: An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English**: Acceptable

**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