Reviewer's report

**Title:** Stool submission by general practitioners in SW England - when, why and how? A qualitative study

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 25 May 2012

**Reviewer:** Charmaine Gauci

**Reviewer's report:**

Discretionary Revisions

**Introduction:**

1. Recommend to give a brief explanation of the notification system in the UK as this could benefit international readers and put them in the picture of the importance of stool cultures in surveillance system.

2. The result of the study outlines will also inform on the use of guidance criteria for stool sampling.

**Methods:**

1. Recommend to include description of any training provided to the interviewers in order to reduce interviewers’ bias.

2. Page 6 table indicated. To give numbers to Table in text.

**Results:**

**Discussion group results**

1. Include short description on how GP’s were made aware of the HPA guidance document when this was issued and any ongoing awareness of these guidelines.

**Discussion**

1. Include possible biases in study including selection bias in choice of participants. Since they were paid, the participating GPs may be biased. The fact that the sampling frame was doctors who attended lectures was that the “interested” doctors participate more and hence result may have been biased.

2. Include biases from interviews and discuss any training done prior to start of interviewers.

3. Discussion needs to include issue of patient compliance/reluctance to submit stool samples as this will influence the submission of samples.

4. Under implications emphasis or under reporting issue of few school culture submission. Since results show that GP’s would ask for stool submission for more severe and longer duration of symptoms would tend to have a biased sample being reported to national authorities.
5. Comment on possible treatment practice and use of antibiotics if stool cultures are not requested and possible effect on problem of antimicrobial resistance.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests’