Reviewer's report

Title: At the coalface and the cutting edge: A qualitative study of the pathways into and rewards of providing HIV medical care in general practice settings

Version: 2 Date: 21 November 2012

Reviewer: Bruno Rushforth

Reviewer's report:

This is a well written and engaging article describing a qualitative study of a sub-group of primary care doctors in Australia who care for, and can prescribe HIV medication for, patients with HIV. The background cogently sets out the issues around engagement of primary care clinicians in this area. The methods section clearly describes how the data presented were obtained as part of a larger study of the HIV general practice workforce in Australia.

Major Compulsory Revisions
1. It is not clear how participants were identified, approached, and recruited.

Minor Essential Revisions
None

Discretionary Revisions
1. From the title it is not immediately clear that the study is looking at the experience of clinicians.
2. Abstract, results: ‘The model [...] was promoted’. It may not be immediately clear who was promoting this model. Suggest change from passive to active voice.
3. Background: Is it possible to quantify the proportion of Australian family doctors who take on this role (additional training to allow them to prescribe HIV-related medication)?
4. Background: Further information about whether / to what extent family doctors in countries outside Australia take on these roles would be helpful. There is mention of the benefits of this model being ‘recognised’ and the potential ‘documented’ – but is it actually happening outside Australia, and if so, to what extent?
5. Methods: ‘In-depth interviews’; it would be helpful to readers to know how long interviews lasted.
6. Methods: There is mention of an ‘analytical framework’ being developed by the team – it would be helpful to readers to have this explained briefly.
7. Results: the authors may wish to consider if they could cut down the total number of quotes used in the results section (e.g. some points are exemplified by 5 different quotes).
8. Discussion: Might it be worth considering any difference in the data obtained from telephone versus face-to-face interviews (the team used both)?

9. Discussion: The paper would benefit from a more structured discussion of the limitations of the study.

Many thanks for the opportunity to review this paper.

Bruno Rushforth
Leeds, UK

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

**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