Reviewer's report

Title: GP perspectives of Irritable Bowel Syndrome - not a contested illness, but management deviates from guidelines: a qualitative study

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Reviewer: Pali Hungin

Reviewer's report:

This research builds on what we know about GPs' attitudes and perceptions about IBS and how they might treat it. The main message is that they feel they can manage the psychological component of the treatment within primary care without external, specialist psychological referral. Whilst this is interesting within the context of this paper (and especially around a more chronic form of symptoms) it is possible that the GPs were not well versed with relatively recent data on the effectiveness of CBT and other psychological interventions. Also, the level of exposure of many GPs to a more "severe" and prolonged form of IBS is likely to be restricted - in these instances GPs will indeed seek external help, even if through the GI specialist route.

The authors need to be congratulated for getting closer to GPs' thinking about IBS and the overall findings are indeed interesting. They add largely to what we know already and the question is whether the "new" data represent an important advance. Not sure about that.

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:

No competing interests. Please note that I have recently been involved in an independent review of papers about IBS and its management by GPs, not connected with this group.