Reviewer's report

Title: Perceptions of quality in primary health care: perspectives of patients and professionals based on focus group discussions

Version: 1 Date: 17 August 2013

Reviewer: Brian McKinstry

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for asking me to review this generally well written article which explores the views of patients and professionals on aspects of primary care across a range of European countries.

The authors have used focus groups in each country. Although we are told 53 patients and 64 professionals (doctors, nurses) from 7 countries, it is not clear how many focus groups were held in each country, what the composition was of these groups in terms of professional mix, demography etc. This is clearly important as big claims are made in the results section in terms of inter-country differences (for example in tolerance of waiting times and attitudes to nurses), but it is possible, and I would say likely, that we are relying on the views of a relatively small number of people to represent each country. There is no description in the methods on who did the coding, how, if at all, this was checked by other members of the research team or if it was reflected to the participants for their view.

In terms of the results, there are no big surprises. People want good access, clinicians want protection from unfettered access. Patients want their clinicians to spend time with them and to put them at the centre of the consultation. Did anyone think for a moment that they were going to say anything other than this?

I was disappointed that the authors did not mention the considerable limitations of the research.

While it is well put together and well reported sadly this study is spread just a little too thin to make a significant contribution to the international literature.

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests: