Reviewer's report

Title: Understanding "revolving door" patients in general practice: a qualitative study

Version: 1  Date: 18 November 2013

Reviewer: Tim Stokes

Reviewer's report:

This paper reports a qualitative study looking at how Scottish GPs and GP service staff view a particular group of "difficult" patients: "revolving door patients" (patients who have been removed 4 or more times from GP lists in the last 7 years). This is an original study and its strength is that it uses appropriate interactionist sociological theory to make sense of how GPs and GP service staff view such patients. It is also more recent than the Stokes et al work (conducted 1999/2000) and correctly highlights a shift in the way drug misuse patients are now managed in primary care. So it is also timely.

Minor essential revisions

1. Page 4. While it needs to be emphasised that this paper is original and that it is the first study to look specifically at repeatedly removed patients only - the authors do overstate slightly the originality of their work. The qualitative work of Stokes et al. (2 of their 3 relevant papers are cited here - references 12 and 22) did not specifically focus on single episode removals. Their work looked at a mix of removed patients: and included patients who would have been repeatedly removed from a GPs list (using the author's definition) as well as single episode removals.

2. Page 4, para 2 should read: "the only QUANTITATIVE evidence of patients ...

3. It would be useful to understand the rationale for their definition of repeatedly removed patients - why "4 or more times in past 7 years".

4. The discussion offers a detailed discussion of key interactionist sociology literature. This is appropriate, however it could discuss in more detail the similar analysis carried out in Stokes et al's work - which also drew on both the work of Kelly/May and Strong (ref22: BMJ 2003: http://www.bmj.com/content/326/7402/1316; Stokes unpublished PhD thesis University of Leicester, 2002) and extended this analysis to use Bourdieu's work (ref. 12). The paper would be strengthened by the authors appropriately reviewing Stokes et al.'s work and showing how their work builds on this earlier analysis. The work of Shaw on dirty work and psychiatric patients should also be discussed further (ref 13).

Discretionary Revisions

1. It would be helpful to refer to need to conduct research on patient perspectives of being repeatedly removed - this was a strength of Stokes et al.'s work (BMJ
2003 - see above)

**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:**
'I declare that I have no competing interests'