Reviewer's report

Title: Family physician views about primary care reform in Ontario: a postal questionnaire

Version: 1 Date: 31 October 2003

Reviewer: Michael M Paterson

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General
While the study/report has no fatal flaws, I wonder about the level of interest/relevance outside Ontario? Also, although the study does give some direction to policy makers, I was disappointed that the authors didn't do more with their opportunity to seek specific, concrete suggestions for change. For example, they predicted and found low support for capitation and rostering. They speculate about some potential causes; among them, lack of understanding. While I agree that educational initiatives will help, more could have been done to seek advice from front line family doctors about what might make future proposals more attractive, acceptable. Also, no special effort was made to tease out or learn from the early adopters or those who have participated in reform pilot projects for several years.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Minor Compulsory Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1. It's now almost 2004, and over a year since the survey was done. The results suggest the 80% enrolment target was unrealistic. Why not add data on actual take up to prove the target was unrealistic, and describe the government's recent efforts to make the transition to the new practice model easier, more attractive.

2. A bit of background work could put the Ontario reforms in context and make the paper more interesting to readers outside Canada.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
The sampling frame for the survey was a list of members of the Ontario College of Family Physicians. Does this frame systematically exclude some physicians that are eligible to participate in the reforms? If yes, who are they, and what are the implications of this bias for the results?

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests: