Reviewer's report

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

Version: Date: 7 January 2004

Reviewer: Brian Hutchison

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The authors have responded satisfactorily to most of the concerns I expressed. However, one “major compulsory revision” (C13) and two “minor compulsory revisions” (C7 and C8) have not been adequately addressed.

C13. Although I agree with the authors that “The presentation of the response categories is clear in Table 4”, this is not true of the text beginning at the bottom of page 6 and continuing onto page 7. Here the response categories are used inconsistently and confusingly. The third sentence of the last paragraph on page 6 reports the proportion of responders who “either agreed or strongly agreed” with the statement. In the next two sentences the category “agreed” refers to people who either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. In the second last sentence of the first paragraph on page 7 the term “either agreed or slightly agreed” is used to refer to respondents who strongly agreed, agreed or slightly agreed with the statement. In the final sentence, the term “wanted to see” is used to refer to respondents who strongly agreed, agreed or slightly agreed. What makes this presentation confusing is the fact that the word “agreed” sometimes refers to the category “agreed” and at other times refers to the combination of the two categories “agreed” and “strongly agreed”. I suggest that this paragraph be rewritten.

C8. The authors have gone part way to addressing this concern. However, the wording of the second sentence in the first paragraph of the Discussion section, “nor do many understand the Network enough to make an informed decision about participating” still seems to imply that a majority disagree that they understand reform enough to make an informed decision, whereas, according to Table 4, 54.9% agree (strongly agree 8.9%, agree 27.7% and slightly agree 18.3%) that they understand reform well enough to make an informed decision about their involvement. In their response to my comment, the authors state “Thus, 74% did not understand the Network - a majority.” This figure contradicts the results presented in Table 4. A change in wording to “and many do not understand the Network well enough to make an informed decision about participating” would satisfy my concerns on this point.

C7. The fact that this is a descriptive study does not, in my opinion, excuse the absence of multivariable analysis. Although I continue to think that multivariable analysis would add value to this paper, I will not push the point further.