Reviewer's report

Title: Length of Patient-Physician Relationship and Patients' Satisfaction and Preventive Service Use in the Rural South: a cross-sectional telephone survey

Version: 1 Date: 5 July 2005

Reviewer: Janko KERSNIK

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The Introduction section: The choice of the literature is biased and the selection process not declared.
The Method section: The original sample number is not reported. The random sampling procedure within one family is not described clearly enough. The nonrespondent, or no contacts deserve a description and comparison with the final sample. The division in the continuity subgroups is not clear. Was it based on previous research/reports, or was it done by the decision of the researchers. If so, we need justification. Why have the researchers in the abundance of patient satisfaction questionnaires invent their own questions? They have to justify that.
The Results section: Response rate respecting the original sample must be reported. Means of the answers or percentages of the responses to the "satisfaction" questions should be reported. Statistical analysis of the questions of patient satisfaction is lacking. I assume, this is not a patient satisfaction questionnaire at all. Symbol < od = should be used as appropriate not both at once.
The Discussion section: A critical review of strength and weaknesses is totally omitted. Discussion on the representativeness of the study population, generalisibility and problems in telephone interviewing should be discussed. I mis comparison to other studies and satisfaction.
References: To narrow focus. There is plenty of the literature on continuity and patient satisfaction even more relevant than cited ones. The selection should be done by some defined criteria, justified, as not all papers can be included.