Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluating a facilitation model to promote organisational development in primary care: The Maturity Matrix.

Version: 2 Date: 17 February 2006

Reviewer: Larry Green

Reviewer's report:

General

The context that makes this report important is the international plea for redesign of primary care practice to achieve higher performance thought to be possible because of new medical knowledge, new system knowledge, and new technology. The transformation of general practice from an industrial model in place for decades if not centuries to a patient centered, information age model seems to be engaged in many countries. This paper, one of a series concerning the work of G Elwyn and others, sheds light on what it will take to actually accomplish transformation of small to medium sized practices (focused on family medicine/general practice).

This report builds particularly on the group’s article in Quality and Safety in Health Care using the updated maturity matrix with 11 dimensions. It reports measures of how well actual facilitation experiences went in 12 practices judged against a model of facilitation. Their model worked, demonstrated in part by areas of deficient facilitation. The methods are appropriately qualitative. The paucity of research about understanding how to help practices improve makes this paper important. It basically uses the same group’s maturity matrix as a standardized tool that allowed probing of what practices might do with it. Whatever the tool or objective proposed by/for practices, this type of knowledge is likely to be relevant. For those interested in practice assistance to change for the better, this report convincingly identifies important distinctions between assessing, educating and facilitating, while exposing critical choices about imposed ideas/strategy vs practice-selected/proposed strategy. It offers creative frameworks to organize efforts. Overall, it is likely to provoke better thinking about the complex undertaking of practice redesign. The conclusions are prudent and defensible from their reported experience. It is the sort of article that makes an interested reader want more.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Box 2 does not work well and should be deleted, retaining the examples, but inserting them directly into text where cited, possibly in italics to set them off as raw data. Going back and forth or ignoring the material in the boxes—reduces the impact and clarity that the authors can obtain by leading the reader from point to point with cogent illustrations.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
Consider re-titling it to not emphasize The Maturity Index. This paper is about enabling practices to change through facilitation. Organizational development and the maturity matrix are an organizing framework, perhaps an important framework worthy of dissemination and widespread use--but the paper’s findings and message is not really about the matrix. It is about assisting practices to learn and change.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.