Reviewer’s report

Title: Bowel Cancer Screening in England: a qualitative study of GPs attitudes and information needs

Version: 1 Date: 22 June 2006

Reviewer: Dejana Braithwaite

Reviewer’s report:

General
This manuscript reports on a qualitative study of attitudes about the newly instituted National Health Service Bowel Cancer Screening Programme in a sample of UK general practitioners (GPs). Of 32 participants, 18 took part in the English Bowel Screening Pilot and 14 had not. Although the GPs were generally positive about the program, several concerns were identified, principally vis-à-vis patient warfare, patient participation and increased workload.
Overall, the question is new and well-defined and the methods are sound and appropriate. As the authors acknowledge, one notable limitation of the study concerns the use of a convenience sample of GPs. Nevertheless, this exploratory study has identified important barriers that need to be overcome in order to ensure the program’s successful roll out.

PROPOSED MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS
Here are some suggestions for improving the manuscript:
1. In the abstract, under findings, comment on the differences and similarities between the pilot and non-pilot GPs.
2. In methods, indicate how many pilot practices there were and how many GPs per pilot practice were identified.
3. In methods, proportions within each subgroup endorsing or rejecting specific themes are not provided. Instead, vague descriptions such as â€˜severalâ€™, â€˜a fewâ€™, â€˜manyâ€™ or â€˜the majorityâ€™ are used. State the number (%) of GPs who spoke to or against each theme. Indicate the number (%) for both groups, pilot and non-pilot.
   For example, p.6. â€˜some felt concerned about screening saturationâ€¦â€ State how many felt concerned.
   p.7. â€œSome individuals suggested that the possible risks of screeningâ€œ How many?
   â€œMany GPs raised concerns that managing the patient anxietyâ€œ How many?
   p7. Several GPs felt that some patients may be disadvantagedâ€œ How many?
   p8. Several pilot GPs say they had anticipated problemsâ€œ How many?
   Etc.
4. Discussion: What are important differences or similarities between the pilot and non-pilot GPs? How do these differences/similarities inform future practice or program’s needs?

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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)
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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
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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