Reviewer's report

Title: Why do patients want to have their blood tested? A qualitative study of patient expectations in general practice

Version: 1 Date: 12 February 2006

Reviewer: Brian McKinstry

Reviewer's report:

General
Thank you for asking me to review this interesting paper. The authors have clearly defined the research question. It may have been more interesting to garner the views of patients who did not wish blood tests as well, but the authors accept this in the discussion and presumably may wish to explore this at a future date.
The sampling strategy was a little unusual for a qualitative project. Effectively this was a convenience sample which appeared to be based solely on the patients desire to have a blood test. No details are given of the sample in terms of social class, education or chronic ill-health (all of which may have influenced desire for tests) nor if any attempt was made to ensure a range of patients for the study. It is not made clear if the practices taking part were typical of Dutch practices. The authors should be more critical in their discussion of the sampling method.
The fieldwork is well described as is the coding. I was a little disappointed that no attempt in the analysis was made to link ideas and findings rather than only list them or perhaps to see if there was any clear linkage to gender or age (although I realise in a qualitative study this is problematical)
In terms of rigour the analysis was repeated by more than one researcher to ensure reliability. The study describes no triangulation, possibly an opportunity was missed with the screening questionnaire.
It is not clear if the investigators sought out observations that might have contradicted or modified the analysis. While they refer to some new data arising from a nurse led interview this is not described. It is not clear to what extent the interviews may have been influenced by the status of those conducting them (hinted at above) and perhaps this should be clarified
The article is well written and pleasant to read. The quotations used are relevant, convincing and neither too numerous nor too sparse.
The conclusions are set in relation to GPs views which are assumed and not part of this study. The conclusion would be better confined to what was found in this study and the need for research into the impact of education of patients in this domain.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
Further discussion about the sampling strategy and its possible weaknesses
Rewriting the abstract conclusion to restrict it more to the study findings and possible future research.

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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)

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

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests