Reviewer’s report

Title: General practices’ beliefs about effectiveness and intentions to recommend smoking cessation services: qualitative and quantitative studies

Version: 1 Date: 12 December 2006

Reviewer: Andrew Wilson

Reviewer’s report:

General
This paper contains a useful, novel and important message; that most GPs welcome services to support smoking cessation and that locally/practice based services are preferred. It complements the authors’ sister paper (their ref 24) which I also reviewed. In both papers the authors acknowledge and discuss limitations of both the qualitative and quantitative approaches.

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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)

1. The organisation of services to support cessation in England is very complex and variable across the country. It is also subject to rapid change! I think some further clarification in the background section would be helpful. In particular the point about training and supervision of in house support seems crucial. My understanding is that there is a move to devolved delivery, and that a key role of central services is to support (and in part fund) practice based staff. So although the last sentence of the first para (suggesting inhouse services operate independently) may have been relevant at the time, it seems less so now. Study 1 results support the assertion that inhouse support includes trained nurses.

2 Related to the above there could be further clarification about group versus individual support. For example in the first para p11 reference is made to 'NHS stop smoking groups', whereas in table 3 the reference is to 'NHS clinics'

3 Interpretation of table 3 would be helped by an additional analysis showing how many GPs intended not to recommend either NHS or local services. Similarly, if available how many respondents could not have an intention to recommend local services because none were available.

4 The literature review and study 2 suggests that a minority of GPs have negative view about support services and don't recommend them. It was surprising that none of the sample in study 1 expressed such views.

5 Some parts of the discussion, eg top of p14 would, I think, be better placed in the background section.

What next?: Accept after discretionary 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'