Reviewer's report

Title: Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening in Community Health Centers: a Qualitative Study

Version: 1 Date: 9 October 2007

Reviewer: Grazia Grazzini

Reviewer's report:

General
The manuscript by Karen E. Lasser and co-workers represents an optimal example of qualitative study, being very rigorous from a methodological point of view.

Therefore, I recommend the publication of this paper, considering also the relative poor availability of good qualitative studies about colorectal cancer screening.

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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. Authors used the term “screening”, but it is very important to distinguish an organised screening programme from an opportunistic screening practice (also named case-finding). Organised screening programmes are based on a coherent structure, offering a standardised system of care, with an active invitation of target population and a systematic quality control about every phase of screening programme.

This is not the case of the United States while in Europe, many countries such as The UK, Finland, The Netherlands, Italy etc, are planning national organised screening programmes for colorectal cancer. Maybe it could be useful to specify the meaning of “screening” in the paper.

2. Authors should describe better what the “community health centers” are, because it could be not clear for a non US reader.

3. A limit of the study is represented by the fact that Authors didn’t investigate barriers to colorectal cancer screening according to the test (fecal occult blood or endoscopic tests). In fact, many studies showed different beliefs of people
according to the different tests that are available in this screening, with also significant variability between genders. Authors should explain this limitation in the discussion.

4. The results from a qualitative analysis conducted in the Pilot Study from UK (http://www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/bowel/finalreport.pdf) were similar in some way to the conclusions of the present paper. Authors should cite that experience.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests