Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 12 October 2007

Reviewer: Lisa Madlensky

Reviewer's report:

General

This is a well-written paper that adds to the current literature of barriers to colorectal cancer screening, and sheds light on issues that may be more prevalent in low-income and ethnically diverse populations.

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

While I appreciate the use of verbatim quotes to provide examples of each theme, some of the physician quotes provide extraneous detail that could potentially lead to identification of individual participants, a serious ethical concern. Specifically, the quotes on the bottom of page 9 and the top of page 13 provide details (one patients' marital situation including ages, the other's specific musculoskeletal diagnosis) that don't really add to the main point, which is simply that physicians perceive patients to have competing comorbid and psychosocial issues.

I would recommend removing the details that would make it possible for a reader to identify these individual patients.

I would also like to see a better description of the IRB and consent process. Did patients explicitly consent to be interviewed, to have their medical record reviewed, and give permission for their physician to discuss details of their medical/social history, even if they were not specifically related to colorectal screening?

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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)

The authors indicate that 301 patients were invited to participate. How many responded? Were patients interviewed in the order in which they replied to the invitation? In the methods section, the authors indicate that they used thematic saturation to decide when to stop conducting interviews, yet in the discussion, suggest that saturation was not likely achieved... these statements need to be
reconciled.

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, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.