Reviewer's report

Title: Development of an educational intervention for patients with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) - a pilot study.

Version: 1 Date: 30 October 2008

Reviewer: Anne Kennedy

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Major compulsory revisions

1. More details are needed about how the information needs of patients were used to develop the content of the IBS school (and what their direct input was i.e. were patients consulted on the content?). Who developed the written information that was given to patients? Was this evidence-based or related to the knowledge of the professionals who delivered it?

2. Specifics are needed about how the self-efficacy theory and General Theory of Nursing were used to design both the content of the education and the evaluation methods used. It is not clear how the outcome measures selected actually relate to these theories.

3. How were the pre-IBS school interviews analysed? Did the findings from these interviews influence the content of the education? It would be helpful to have a section in the results describing any analysis done on these interviews. It is a shame that no face to face interviews were done with the participants after the IBS school.

4. Need to justify why a generic HRQoL was used rather than an IBS-specific measure.

5. At this pilot stage, it is important to know what aspects of the education did not work well – e.g. the attendance was not that good given that this was a tightly selected small group – do the authors have any information on why people did not attend sessions? More details on why goals weren’t met or only partially met would be helpful.

6. A more critical appraisal of the IBS school is needed in the discussion. This is a high intensity intervention requiring the involvement of five health professionals – do the authors think that such an education intervention for this group of patients is something that health service organizations would be willing to pay for?

Minor essential revisions

1. The whole paper would be improved by someone editing it to improve the translation from Swedish to English – the grammar and terminology is clumsy and awkward in places and there are a few spelling mistakes.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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'