Reviewer's report

Title: Perceptions of healthcare professionals regarding the main challenges and barriers to effective hospital infection control in Mongolia: a qualitative study.

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Reviewer: Jacqueline Randle

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The question posed by the research team is an important one and would be of interest to an international audience, as effective implementation is usually a challenge when attempting to reduce HCAIS. As qualitative studies are scarce, the manuscript has the potential to contribute new knowledge to this important area.

As the team aim to explore the main challenges of implementation of infection control procedures, it is appropriate to use a qualitative framework, and the stages of qualitative method are followed. The qualitative framework is not adequately described and although terms such as data saturation are used, it is difficult to evaluate the study in terms of its credibility due to this inadequate description. This is more relevant when considering the findings and the data offered do not adequately provide the reader with enough information.

Frequently, summary text is provided followed by a two line quote. As the team interviewed a high number of participants and data saturation was used, it would have been beneficial to see more of the data as this would strengthen the credibility of the study. The study identifies many sensitive issues such as the falsification of documentation and overall the findings display a negative picture. As the data isn’t rich in description it is difficult to distinguish if this is a balanced perspective. My concern is that the study was conducted four years ago and there is no reference as to the context of the study and how this could have possibly have transformed in the intervening years. I note that the findings are reported elsewhere under a different theme of ‘gaming’ and this is not acknowledged.

The title and abstract accurately reflect the study’s aims and findings and overall the writing is clear and concise. In the UK it is usual for manuscripts to adopt the term healthcare associated infections rather than HAI and it is convention not to start a sentence with an abbreviation –these are obviously minor points.