Reviewer's report

Title: Patient perceptions of safety and quality of maternity clinical handover

Version: 3 Date: 18 May 2011

Reviewer: Ans Luyben

Reviewer's report:

General impression
Thank you for your revised paper on patients’ perceptions of the safety and quality of maternity clinical handover and comments. This revised paper has extremely improved on the description of the abstract, methodology and conclusion. Thank you for this.

However I noticed little change in the description of the results (including Table 2) and discussion section, which in my opinion, remain the weak parts of the articles.

Question 4/ Discretionary revisions
The data as such seem sound, but sometimes the quantitative numbers seem to contradict the description of the results. The authors chose a quantitative mode as an alternative, which is a bit unusual, but quite well to understand. However the grounded theory approach (including constant comparison) also aims for data saturation (i.e. the majority of the data support the results). Therefore I still find it difficult to find such support for example in following parts:

Cognitive artefacts:
Paragraph I: in Table 2, the numbers are very small. Do they support the findings? This table does not add value to the article.
Paragraph II: “Cross-checking”- how many women mentioned this observation?
Paragraph III: mentioned by 6 participants only?
Patient and support people:
Paragraph III: the numbers are very low. Is it all participants or some participants? How about the other 87% and 93%?
Paragraph IV: similar. I do not understand specifically mentioned by only 2 out of 30?
Paragraph V: Compared to the other results, 20% plus 13% seems a lot, who do not agree with results that are described earlier in this article.

Question 5/ Minor essential revisions
I still miss the Findings/ results as a starting point of the discussion, and a well balanced development of this discussion based on this and well as the contradicting results (Paragraph VI). What did was really done? What are the
main results? And at the end; what are will be done with the results in a next step (research, practice?)?

Paragraph I: The aim of the study described at the beginning of the Discussion is not coherent with the aim of the study as stated at beginning of the Conclusion

AIM Discussion: “The participants in this study described patient-centred strategies to promote quality and safety through handover through TSA between clinicians as well as patients (and support people). This reflects the potential roles of the patient and her support people not only as the recipient of health care but also as an active participant in her own management.”

AIM Conclusion: “This study illustrated that patients were aware of a handover process and viewed it as an indicator of teamwork, communication and professionalism. This is an important finding when planning for further handover improvements, its evaluation and future research”.

Paragraph I: Before developing the study in more depth; a summary of the most important findings of the study is lacking? What was really found?

Paragraph VI: This makes the impression of a “loose” statement of findings that contradict earlier statements. How should this be balanced with other findings?

And now? What are is going to happen next?

Limitations: Are all described, but “all” seem a bit superfluous. Could these be reduced on the most relevant limitations that the study experienced?

Generalisibility?

Table/ Figures/ Minor essential revisions

Table 2: Is this Table really necessary? In the text the use of these artefacts is highlighted, whereas from this Table I get the impression that the use was very low (N = 30)?

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 not competing interest below