Reviewer’s report

Title: The perception of primary health care professionals about education in diabetes mellitus, Brazil

Version: 5 Date: 12 April 2010

Reviewer: Charles Campion-Smith

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Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
It needs to be made clear at the beginning that this paper is about professionals’ role in providing education for patients (not other professionals). Consistent use of a term such as ‘patient education’ would help avoid confusion.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
As stated before both title and abstract need to be made clearer that this paper is about professionals’ views about their role as patient educators in diabetes. At present it could easily be assumed that the paper is in part or whole about professionals’ own or peers’ education about diabetes.

Minor Essential Revisions

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
I feel that some of the conclusions do not clearly arise from the data presented. In the final sentence of the abstract it is reasonable to suggest that the data supports changes (though I would say these are principally in the organisation of patient education and the preparation, training and support of those professionals delivering it) ) but there is little in the data presented to support the call for evaluation of educational strategies.

Introduction para 2 “Furthermore these authors emphasized that if educational programs are evaluated individuals obtain better diagnosis and treatment outcomes.” is a surprising statement and there is nothing in the data shown from this study that confirms the relationship between evaluation of education and patient outcomes.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
It is not clear how representative the participants of the study were of professionals working in diabetes patient education – did the mix of professions and their experience and training reflect all those working in this field? This was a small scale study and it is not clear how much the findings relate to local arrangements for diabetes patient education. The authors therefore should be
more cautious about the generalisability of this work.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?

There is a huge literature about patient education in diabetes and it is a challenge to be sure that the most relevant papers are referenced. I could see no reference to motivational interviewing which may have strong relevance in health promoting patient education. In 'Method' Freire’s theory is mentioned without any explanation or reference. There are no references for the data analysis methodology used. In discussion the term ‘patient blaming’ is used – there is a considerable literature about this that might be usefully referred to.

In Changes to the diabetes care model a reference to support the introductory sentence ‘In the education process…..’ would be appropriate

9. Is the writing acceptable?

The writing is largely acceptable. There are however some errors and inconsistencies as well as examples of sentences whose meaning is not clear.

a. Spelling of mellitus in title!

b. In Method what is meant by ‘non-sensitive topics’?

c. Sentences such as ‘The objective of the focus group was to know the educational practice and factors that act as barriers or facilitators in teaching diabetes self management are very long winded – simpler (e.g. the focus group explored barriers and facilitators for successful patient education in diabetes) is usually better.

d. In Method para 2 I did not understand the meaning of ‘justified’ in the sentence beginning ‘Criteria for selecting…….’

e. In Method the term ‘focal group’ seems to be used interchangeably with ‘focus group’ The latter is the more usual term at least in UK literature.

f. In the sentence beginning ‘In the first meeting…. ‘ on a participation contract’ does not make sense.

g. ‘The researchers occupy one role the research’ is meaningless

h. The meaning of b) the poor integration between professionals and patients’ is not clear to me

i. In Results para 2 does ‘inadequate knowledge’ refer to professionals’ knowledge or patients’?

j. In Perception about work organisation para 4 does ‘Motivation’ refer to professionals’ or patients’?

k. The meaning of sentence ‘The participants indicated that some factors……….. ‘ is unclear. Could this be rewritten in simpler language?

l. Diabetes-related educational practices. The data suggests to me that lack of skills, preparation, time, training and support are all hindering factors here but this is not clearly and simply stated.
m. Quote E10 does not seem to relate to the statement above it. Does ‘integration’ refer to communication? I was not clear about what ‘not concerned’ meant. Does it refer to lack of concern / worry or lack of current involvement?

n. In discussion the sentence ‘In addition, the approach…….’ is very longwinded – the final phrase ‘to grant patients control….’ is much clearer and better

o. Discussion para 2 Whose motivation – patients’ of professionals’?

p. Discussion para 5 Whose capacity for memorization?

q. Discussion para 9 ‘……showing that there is no profess…..’ What does this mean?

r. Reference 4. Evolution or evaluation?

s. Reference 17 Needs to be in consistent format

Discretionary Revisions

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?

3. Are the data sound?

Qualitative method with focus groups is an appropriate way of exploring this topic. However there is little detail of how the data was analysed, were the categories determined in advance or did they arise from the themes found in the data?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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 I have no competing interests