Reviewer's report

Title: Pragmatic assessment of the relative efficiency of outreach chlamydia screening events conducted in non-clinical settings

Version: 4 Date: 10 January 2012

Reviewer: Rachel Sacks-Davis

Reviewer's report:

The authors have addressed most of the reviewers’ comments and submitted a revised and reoriented manuscript, which is much clearer and more focused than the previous submission. Further comments are relatively minor.

Minor essential revisions:

Results and discussion:
1. Remove use of “/” as a symbol for “per” and replace with the word, “per”, where this appears in the text (“/” is acceptable in the Table). E.g., “screens/event hour” should be “screens per event hour”.

Discussion:
2. Missing full-stop at the end of paragraph two.
3. Change “collect3ed” to “collected” in paragraph six.

Discretionary revisions:

Title:
4. There is a discrepancy between the title in the manuscript and that provided in the response to reviewer 2, Kevin Theuissen: an “A” has been omitted in the manuscript title. The authors may wish to revise this.

Introduction:
5. Consider revising the final sentence of the introduction – it is currently rather long and unwieldy.
6. The stated aim of the paper is to “provide more comprehensive efficiency information to assist the program managers (and funders) to determine the most efficient staffing levels and where to target SOC2 screening efforts in the future.” This aim appears to be focused quite narrowly on the future of the SOC2 program. In order to be relevant for publication in an international journal such as BMC public health, the aim should be broader (major essential revision).

Methods:
7. Remove the reference to more detailed information being published elsewhere unless a reference can be provided.
8. The following sentence should be revised for grammar: “Participants were provided with written information about chlamydia testing and the method of follow-up – only for individuals with positive tests”.

9. Consider starting a new paragraph at “Individuals were considered to have been…”.

10. Consider making the following amendment because the sentence is placed in the description of the event methods rather than the analytical methods: Change “we were unable to control for people who approached the staff more than once” to “we were unable to determine whether people approached the staff more than once and were therefore unable to rule out that some people were counted more than once in the denominator.” In the following sentence I believe that “determine whether” is the correct usage rather than “determine if”.

Discussion:

11. The sentence, “If the number of chlamydia screens performed is the principal outcome measure of a successful program…”, implies that there will be a quantitative comparison made between the efficiency of the SOC2 program and other programs; however, no such comparison is made. The authors say that they have done this in the response to reviewers (response to Rachel Sacks-Davis, major compulsory revisions 5); however, the comparison is only made in general terms and there is no specific comparison between the relative efficiency of this program compared to the previously published studies. In order to demonstrate the relevance of the study in the context of other previous research, quantitative comparisons to previous program efficiency results should be made if possible.

12. In relation to the sentence, “while case yields from population screening…,” is there quantitative data available on case yields from clinic-based services? If these are available, a direct comparison would be valuable.

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