Reviewer's report

Title: Development and validation of a measure of health literacy in the UK: the Newest Vital Sign

Version: 2 Date: 28 September 2012

Reviewer: Joanne Protheroe

Reviewer's report:

This paper describes the amendment and validation of a UK version of the Newest Vital Sign; a US developed test of health literacy. I like this paper and I think that it deserves publication to reach a wider audience. Prior to publication I would prefer to see a couple of relatively minor amendments and additions to the paper.

Minor Essential

My main amendments would be to the methods chapter.

1. There is a lack of detail in some of the sections pertaining to recruitment. It is fairly clear how the panel of experts were recruited for the Delphi technique, presumably on-line (although this is not stated).

2. It is less clear how participants were recruited for the cognitive testing or validation studies. For the former, the authors state that the participants were recruited purposively from Lambeth residents – but not how, face to face on the street, postal? Nor do they describe how they purposively sampled according to their criteria.

3. In addition it is not clear to me, not having any knowledge of ‘market research’, what grades D and E represent, a little more description would benefit the reader.

4. For the validation study there is no description of the recruitment process beyond post codes and age bands – where did they get this data and then how were participants invited to take part? In addition I would like to see more detail of how the authors arrived at their sample size calculation.

5. In the results section it would be interesting to see who made up the recruited expert panel that were approached to take part from clinical practice, public health, dietetics, research, adult education and food and drink industry.

6. The results are well presented, although I found Table 1 and Table 2 slightly difficult to interpret and these would benefit from clearer labelling, so that the reader does not need to keep referring back to the text. In Table 1 I presume that the figures under the column headed Lambeth mean the % of the Lambeth population that is made up of the row characteristic. This is not clear. In Table 2 the insertion of an extra row for ‘Sample’ makes things a little clearer, as do the % signs in the column headings, but still a little confusing.
7. The grammar and standard of writing is excellent with very few typographical errors:
- Missing word page 6 ‘data were also collected socio-demographic’
- Incorrect word page 7 ‘participants were from groups like to have low health literacy’

**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 no competing interests