Reviewer's report

Title: Healthcare worker's attitudes to working during pandemic influenza. A qualitative study

Version: 3 Date: 15 December 2008

Reviewer: Raymond A Strikas

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Major Compulsory Revisions:

The manuscript addresses the important issue of the attitudes of UK health care personnel from three NHS trusts' towards working during an influenza pandemic. Almost all the results are qualitative, making it difficult to judge how useful the information is to judge what workers from these three trusts would do during an influenza pandemic, and how to address these concerns now, before such an event. Without such recommendations, backed by defined data, the manuscript is of limited value. If the authors cannot answer these questions, they should consider conducting a survey that includes a representative sample of NHS trust staff. Questions that should be answered to consider this paper more fully include:

Are the health care personnel who were interviewed representative of all health care personnel in the three trusts by occupation, gender, age, and racial or ethnic group?

How was their participation as volunteers solicited?

Some numeric and percentage estimates are important to support statements such as (page 5) "Overall, participants felt a strong sense of duty to work..." How many and what percentage expressed such a sense of duty? (Page 7) "Many participants ... felt they had an obligation to continue to work..." (Page 11) Under "The risk to oneself" "... the risk to oneself seemed to be of less concern. (Page 12, paragraph 2) "The management group,..., tended to feel differently..." (Page 14, Discussion): "NHS staff in our study ... tended to believe that they should...work through an influenza pandemic" and "One of the most significant concerns ... was that they were not being told what was expected of them."

A strategy of education is proposed to address the last concern, but how well documented is it that it is important?

Minor Essential Revisions:

Page 3, paragraph 4: why is a finding in Australia of limited applicability to the UK, because of disparate health care staff makeup, and/or different health care systems?

Page 4: Under recruitment, please define "snowballing."
Under Design, the first sentence states the N of participants was 59, but the rest of the paper says it was 64. Please clarify.

Page 15, paragraph 3: The Quereshi et al reference should be #21, and the Ehrenstein et al one should be #20.

Figure 1: I cannot easily distinguish between the three type of arrows pointing in one direction; suggest one be dotted, one dashed, the last solid, or some other designation not dependent on shading of a solid line.

END

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.