Reviewer's report

Title: Recognition and use of the bio-psychosocial model of pain management in British pain clinics - results of a qualitative study of staff from a range of disciplines.

Version: 2 Date: 21 December 2009

Reviewer: Michael Nicholas

Reviewer's report:

The researchers have made a number of changes to the original version of the paper and these have improved it. However, some aspects remain to be addressed.

In their responses to my previous criticisms, the researchers state that they were concerned with how pain clinics and pain management programmes manage patients for whom physical interventions (like drug management, TENS and exercises) are either inappropriate or have been proven ineffective. However, this is not reflected in the title or the aims. This is confusing and needs to be clarified.

They also state in the Introduction to the paper: “In this paper we have analysed the views of professionals working in pain clinics and a pain management unit to investigate whether promoting the bio-psychosocial model of pain is an important part of their therapeutic intervention in the pain clinic” The authors really need to be much clearer about their aims as these statements appear to me to be quite different.

In their responses to my previous criticism the authors go on to state the analysis was conducted by researchers with no a prior assumptions about the biopsychosocial model, other than that it would reflect in equal measure considerations of the model's biological, psychological and social character. But why did they assume these elements would be present in equal measure? The biopsychosocial model is really a framework for considering the types of factors likely to influence the impact and outcomes of an illness. The actual contribution factors from each source make in practice is assumed to vary, which is why we might be able to use it to explain differences between people presenting with the same illness or disease. Nevertheless, the finding that few of the clinics surveyed are able to devote much time to the social/environmental factors is important to report and the researchers are correct to raise their concerns about the implications for this finding in terms of treatment outcomes and service delivery.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.