Reviewer’s report

Title: Problems and needs for improving primary care of osteoarthritis patients: the views of patients, general practitioners and practice nurses.

Version: 2  Date: 6 January 2006

Reviewer: Catherine MacLean

Reviewer’s report:

General
Although this manuscript has improved with revision, it could be improved further by presenting the findings in a more quantitative fashion as suggested in my prior review. The authors have done a nice job of clarifying that the data reported represent the opinions of the focus group participants rather than fact. The abstract likewise needs to be clarified (e.g. GPs reported that diagnosing OA posed no problems but that they found it difficult…)

The manuscript still makes some claims that are not supported by the data presented. The authors should carefully review the manuscript and make sure they do not overstate their findings. For example, the statement “Consequently, NSAIDs are the main pillar in the pharmacological and evidence-based therapy of OA” overstates the info gleaned from providers about paracetamol use and is factually incomplete. As alluded to by the authors, paracetamol is the first line analgesic for treating OA because a large body of evidende demonstrates that it is as efficacious as NSAIDs in the treatment of mild to moderate OA and has fewer side effects than NSAIDs. In the discussion section the authors note that NSAIDs represented the most important treatment for GPs but note that patients are reluctant to take the medications as a result of side effects. From these data the authors suggest “emphasizing positive effects of NSAIDs and opiates and importance of pain control for physical ability instead of arguing about side effects could lead to a more appropriate pain treatment.” The data additionally suggest to me that the physicians and patients should be educated about using paracetamol at appropriate doses.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'