Reviewer’s report

Title: Pay for performance: will dentistry follow?

Version: 5 Date: 9 February 2010

Reviewer: Paul Batchelor

Reviewer’s report:

This version is a resubmission of a paper following an earlier critique. The authors have in my opinion substantially improved the paper and I would now recommend it for publication. There are a number of small areas that could be modified although these do not detract from what is now a thoughtful piece that adds to the debate.

The ‘Background’ section of the abstract could be considerably shortened. In my view the authors have identified that pay for performance measures have been adopted in the general health sector. This article provides an overview of the issues surrounding their adoption and how these might be applied to the dental sector. The ‘Discussion’ section of the abstract could also be shortened.

On page 12, I think reordering to the first two sentences would strengthen the point made: the issue I think the authors are trying to make centres on the identification of factors within the profession of which membership of a professional association is one.

On page 14 the authors use the word ‘provision’ of care in the first sentence. I think the phrase ‘treatment modalities’ is more appropriate. Provision of care is a wider concept and given the nature of dental care may well be explainable. The issue is more about for a particular condition what do individuals end up receiving.

In their final comment, that covering data, the authors’ valid points could be strengthened by the need to ensure that data were both valid and reproducible. Data collection per se won’t improve matters unless they accurately measure what is present. Indeed, the authors’ comments on claims data to some extent highlight the problem.

These issues apart, the authors are to be congratulated on their work and the changes made from the earlier version.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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