Reviewer’s report

Title: Care coordination among pediatricians and dentists: A cross-sectional study of opinions of dentists caring for young children

Version: Date: 27 January 2014

Reviewer: William Murray Thomson

Reviewer’s report:

General comments
Overall idea of the study is sound and the findings could be useful with some further work.

The writing needs close attention – someone other than the authors needs to go through a hard copy of the MS with a red pen. There are some inappropriate apostrophes – see whether you can find and correct them – it will be good practice.

Use page numbers – it assists the reviewers and editors.

Your respondents are not ‘subjects’; they are respondents or participants. Use modern terminology. We no longer subject people to our research efforts; we invite them to participate as fully-informed participants.

Section-specific comments

Title
OK.

Abstract
What’s the research question? Needs to be in the Background part.
Change ‘regarding’ to something more appropriate, like ‘on’.
Last Methods sentence is inadequate.
Results part inadequate. How many? Last sentence is appalling – ‘...opinions ... was associated with...compared to...’. Avoid the awful ‘compared to’, for a start.
Conclusions – interesting assumption there, that one about physicians promoting early childhood oral health. And another ‘regarding’ there to be culled...

Background
Define ‘dental home’ for nonUS readers. Introduction section is VERY US-centric, with no concessions to the international readership. For a start (and only the start), define ‘Medicaid’ and why it is relevant. There are also the implicit assumptions that (1) dentists can prevent disease, and (2) that all we need to do to promote oral health is to focus on providing services. I thought we’d got past
that to looking a little wider these days…

Para 2, sent 1 – what do you mean by ‘different jargon’? Clarify. Do you mean different terminology? Next sent – change ‘than’ to ‘from’.

Next page (see what I mean about page numbers?)

Para 1 – get rid of the awful cliché ‘studies reveal that…’, and there is a missing ‘of’ in that sentence. What do you mean by ‘limited dental workforce’? – is it that there are too few dentists, or is it that too few are willing to see them, or is it that too few have the appropriate training? Please clarify.

Para 2 – don’t tell us what you DID here; tell us WHY the study was done and what research question(s) you set out to answer.

Methods

Hyphenate ‘cross sectional’. That entire first sentence needs serious attention – ‘determine characteristics of dentists associated with opinions regarding…’ – really? It can (and should) be written much better than that.

Sample – not clear. Was the 1000 the number in the sampling frame, or was it the size of the sample, that is, the resultant one-third? What was the size of the former? Justify the N, too.

Survey design – they are not ‘surveys’ (sent 3) – they are questionnaires. The entire study is a survey.

Last line on that page – change ‘within 2 weeks after’ to ‘within 2 weeks of’.

Next page.

Variable construction. Sent 2 – change ‘compared to’ to ‘than’. See how easy it is to avoid the awful and meaningless ‘compared to’? Next sentence – clarify that.

Last line – change ‘publically’ (no such word) to ‘publicly’.

Next page.

The para beginning ‘Two binary…’ is unclear. Was this determined as a summated scale, or as individual item means?

Next para – the first two sentences contain a number of uses of ‘if’ which should all be changed to ‘whether’, in the interests of correct English.

Analysis section, last sentence – reword this. ‘The level of statistical significance was…’

Results

Sentence 1 has problems. Make the numbers clearer – the response rate stats are pretty murky and need to be more explicit. Double-check your rates.

Omit subheadings – not needed.
PLEASE fix those apostrophes….eg – second results page, line 5 – there should not be one there on “dentists’” (or in line 10 – and in that sentence, reword the ‘as compared to’), but there should be one in line 1 of the Discussion (not the first instance of dentists, but the second one).

Tables
Do not present your percentages to 2 decimal places – you are implying a degree of precision which is just not there – use 1 dp only. Ditto the scale score – the unit of measurement is an integer, so you are justified in going only to 1dp in your summary data.

Anchor all of your Table footnotes. See the Gerodontology instructions to authors – it has a good section on setting out Tables, irrespective of the target journal.
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/store/10.1111/%28ISSN%291741-2358/asset/homepages/Gerodontology-Authors_-Guide-to-Tables-and-Figures.pdf?v=1&s=2aec38a94231de0c47f71397ef77e7e3a567c724&isAguDoi=false

Table 3 – your RRs should be to 1 dp only.

Take care with pagination so that you do not end up with page breaks in the middle of your Tables. Ctrl-enter at the beginning of a Table will give you a hard page break.

Discussion
The Discussion is too long for what you have. It’s a little survey of dentists in NC – that’s all. Also, nowhere in the Discussion is there any consideration of the wider influences on child oral health – eg see Fisher-Owens et al (Pediatr 2007; 120: e510-20) for a wider look at the world and what actually influences oral health in children. You need to concede somewhere that you have not explored all of the important influences, but that they were beyond the scope of your study.

Para 2 – there’s a lazy ‘compared to’ there which can be worded more appropriately.

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

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