Reviewer's report

Title: Patient-Centred Care in General Dental Practice - A Systematic Review of the Literature

Version: 1
Date: 8 April 2014

Reviewer: Paul Batchelor

Reviewer's report:

All suggested changes are discretionary.

This paper provides an assessment of the published literature in the English language that could be used to inform the current development in the dental sector of what is termed ‘patient centred care’. Using a well-explained framework, the authors do an excellent job of highlighting the current weak evidence base underpinning the work that NHS England have adopted in their pilot work surrounding a possible new General Dental Services contract.

Overall the authors are to be congratulated in providing a well argued and written paper that is both timely and is of importance. I would recommend the paper for publication and have made some minor suggestions below that the authors may wish to consider prior to possible publication.

First, I’m not sure whether the authors need to bring in the issue of the potential DQOF aspect in a potential new contract. What the authors have set out to identify is the basis for what is termed ‘patient centred care’. As they themselves highlight, the work has relevance across all care delivery systems. As such, I would suggest that the background to their work centres more on the growing recognition of the importance of the term in all aspects of health care and the lack of its exploration in the dental field.

Second, the authors comment on the distinct differences between the dental field and the general health secondary care field. While I am not sure I agree with their comments that the primary medical and dental sectors are the same: the authors commenting in particular that communication and partnerships were key elements. The authors may wish to expand on this as while I would support their observation concerning the secondary care aspects, there are major differences between medical and dental arrangements in the UK that are not applicable in other delivery systems which might account for their observations.

Third, and very minor, the consistency in using the term patient centred care changes. There are a small number of occasions when the apostrophe is missing.

Overall, a piece of well constructed work with wide implications that is strongly recommended for publication.
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'