Reviewer’s report

Title: Minimising Barriers to Dental Care in Older People

Version: 1 Date: 30 October 2007

Reviewer: Ruth R Freeman

Reviewer's report:

General
This is a well constructed paper which examines felt needs of older people living in 3 inner city borough of South London. The authors provide some interesting insights into the barriers perceived by the older people. They also provide some suggestions for reducing or minimising barriers to accessing dental care. The authors should separate the results and discussion sections into ‘Results’ and ‘Discussion’. It might be of value to include a separate section on Recommendations to reduce barriers to dental care.

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

Abstract:
The authors should mention that they used a purposive sampling technique and state the 3 boroughs of South London where they recruited the sample. This will make the inclusion of the boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham more understandable to the reader in the introduction.

Introduction and aim:
1. In the section of uptake of services the authors need to clarify whether they are referring to the whole of the UK or just England and Wales?
2. In the section on the aim of the study the authors mention that ‘Two of the 4 main objectives ....are presented in this paper’ – what were the other 2 objectives and where will they be reported?

Methods:
1. The authors state approximately – exactly how many centres and groups did they visit?
2. Did they assess the respondents’ degree of cognitive functioning? If so could they provide information on this process?
3. When did they decide to stop gathering the qualitative data – with saturation of the categories? The authors need to state why and when they decided to bring the interviews to a close.
4. More information should be provided on the Framework Methodology as this could be of value to those wishing to use this methodology in the analysis of
qualitative data.
5. A table providing the demographic profile should be included.

Results and discussion:
1. This is a long section and it may be worth the authors thinking of reducing the number of quotes.
2. I would be interested to see how the main concerns of the sample population were used in the section to inform accessible dental care for this priority group.
3. Some examples of how the respondents’ main concerns to access dental care were informative of the recommendations would be helpful for those working in this area of special care dentistry.

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

I was unable to access Appendix 1 and so could not comment upon it.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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

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