Reviewer's report

Title: "If you can't treat HPV, why test for it?" Women's attitudes to the changing face of cervical cancer prevention - a focus group study.

Version: 1 Date: 30 December 2013

Reviewer: Leslie Massad

Reviewer's report:

This paper presents results of focus group study from 2007-8 on HPV vaccination and screening. In any revision, the authors should consider the following (all considered major/compulsory).

Abstract

1) The lead conclusion is that women are attached to cytology, but there is no mention of surveying women about attitudes toward cytology in the Methods or Results. How was this determined?

General

2) The focus groups were conducted in 2007-8. Results on HPV vaccination are probably no longer valid and should be removed. These results are also unlikely to be valid because women were asked about vaccine acceptability but are beyond the target ages for vaccination (prior to sexual debut). The paper should focus on acceptability of HPV as a screening tool.

Results

3) How do we know that the 59 women in 10 focus groups are representative of the Irish population? If we don't know, how can we be certain that results are valid and generalizable?

Discussion

4) As in the abstract, the lead conclusion is women's trust in cytology, but there are no results presented to show this. Methods describing how this trust was measured and results showing how the intensity of trust was determined must be presented.

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 I have no competing interests.