Reviewer’s report

Title: Barriers among Danish women and general practitioners to raising the issue of intimate partner violence in general practice: a qualitative study

Version: 3 Date: 4 May 2013

Reviewer: Maria Papadakaki

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the invitation to review this interesting manuscript. Though there has been a lot of prior work on victims’ and professionals’ attitudes about IPV in other countries, less work exists in Denmark and this makes the current study important. The use of qualitative methods is suitable given the small amount of prior work with these populations. The study would have been much stronger if more participants were employed in the study groups.

Major compulsory revisions:

1) INTRODUCTION: Adding research questions and study hypotheses at the end of this section would help the readers understand what the authors are investigating. Additionally, there are three categories of respondents employed in the study and justification for this selection is not provided in the study objectives and literature review.

2) METHODS: The process of recruitment is not very clear. It is not justified why three respondent categories were employed. How many eligible GPs were in total and how they were selected? Moreover, why the authors used snowball techniques to recruit GPs? This technique would have been more relevant to recruit abused women as it is used in populations that are not easily approached. Why and how women without a history of abuse were selected through facebook? What inclusion/exclusion criteria were in place and how eligibility of participants was controlled. Women with previous history of abuse were both selected through refugees and facebook? The selection process is not clear as different recruitment methods are used interchangeably. The authors could improve this part.

3) RESULTS: The presentation of the results is made by category of respondent although a number of parent categories/key themes have been identified under the paragraph CODING and ANALYSIS. These dominant themes have not been presented anywhere in text. I suggest the results and discussion to be guided by the themes identified in the analysis instead of the respondent category.

4) RESULTS: The authors have introduced a discussion of their findings and comparison with other studies in the RESULTS section, which is rather unusual. I suggest not including conclusions when presenting the results but later in the DISCUSSION section.

5) DISCUSSION: The data from the three respondent groups could be elaborated and exploited better in the discussion to lead to certain conclusions. It
seems that the three datasets are handled separately.

Minor essential revisions:
1) INTRODUCTION: The introduction could benefit from a large discussion between supporters and opponents of routine enquiry and the relevant literature.
2) METHODS: I suggest providing all items of the interview guide (if many as an Appendix) as one item per respondent group provided in Table 2 is not very helpful.
3) METHODS: I have the feeling that the authors employed a thematic analysis in the study. If so, please inform the Coding and Analysis section.
4) LIMITATIONS: The authors should refer to the limited external and internal validity of the study due to the small sample size.
5) GENERAL REMARK: The authors need to emphasize throughout the paper the preliminary nature of these results and be extremely careful not to make any statements that would generalize these results.

Discretionary revisions:
1) RESULTS: Tables 1 and 3 could be incorporated into a small paragraph describing the sample characteristics in more detail. Mean age should be provided as well.
2) RESULTS: When speaking about the majority of participants in so small numbers of participants, it would be helpful to include the actual number as well.
3) RESULTS: The past and present tenses are used interchangeably in the RESULTS section and should be checked for consistency.

Level of interest: An article of importance 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