Reviewer's report

Title: Why do general practitioners decline opportunities for feedback from trained peers on the quality of appraisal evidence?

Version: 1 Date: 2 January 2012

Reviewer: Martjie de Villiers

Reviewer's report:

It is my opinion that this is very valuable and good article, there are however some recommendations to be made.

Major compulsory revisions:
1. The title and the discussion correlate, but the title and the research questions are not in line with one another. Please revisit and formulate new title in line with research question.
2. In the Background, p.5, first paragraph, it states that you want to identify barriers and ascertain attitudes, but when reading the results, the barriers are not clearly identified. My suggestion would be to tabulate the themes, and indicate the barriers and attitudes related to each theme, to ensure clarity to the reader.
3. Some references are extremely old. It should be kept in mind that the reference of Festinger, dated 1957 is acceptable, because it is a theory. Referencing Hammond dated 1978 regarding public policy formation is unacceptable, there should be more current literature available. Please look at the references and update where applicable.

Minor essential revisions
1. There are inconsistencies in the reference list, for example reference number 4, the 58(547) is in bold, but not reference number 16.
2. There are also other mistakes made in the reference list, for example, reference number 20: L. Scott, instead of Scott, L. There are also brackets that should not be there (reference 16) and also the inconsistent use of full stops at the end of references.
3. Reference 30: et. al. should never be used in a reference list - all authors should be identified in a reference list, et.al. is only used in text to cite.
4. There are also inconsistency in the headings - when bold and italised and when not. For example, all sub-headings are bolded, but not the sub-headings under Discussion.
5. Also inconsistencies in the upper and lower casings - page 5 Setting, Sample and Sampling Procedure versus page 6 Data collection
6. This is an article that will be read world wide. Is the definition and responsibilities and competencies of a GP the same all over the world? If not, then this should be clarified in the background or at least give a definition of a GP.
in Scotland.

7. In the abstract, page 2, the background paragraph, line 6, you refer to the model, name the model and everywhere else give the specific name of the model to exclude confusion

8. In the background, page 3, paragraph 2 you refer to the UK model. Is this the same model as the above mentioned?

9. In the background, page 3, paragraph 3, the first sentence is very long - 39 words. one loses the meaning of the sentence, divide into two sentences.

10. Background, page 4, paragraph 1, line 6, you refer to the adaptation of the cognitive continuum theory which has been previously described. Previously described where? In this article or in the literature and which literature?

11. Please reconstruct sentence 2, paragraph 1, page 4. The sentence as it is, is confusing. For example, The medical deanery in the west of Scotland, an existing peer feedback model ..... 

12. Where the initial 6 interviews included in the final sample size? This should be clarified and explained why or why not. (Methods, page 5)

13. Methods, page 5, first paragraph, line 6, iterative study.... this statement should be supported by a citation

14. Please clarify the following terminology: principal, locum, other. (Page 5, setting, sample and sampling procedure)

15. Clearly state "inclusion criteria" and then give a rational for including each of the variables. (page 5, setting, sample and sampling procedure)

16. Rather refer to position than post held (page 5, setting, sample and sample procedure, line 4)

17. Is it really meaningful to refer to which researchers identified the meaningful text within the interviews? (Page 7, paragraph 1)

18. The words this or these should always be followed by a noun. For example page 7 paragraph 1, the last sentence ...and these were used to clarify... These what?

19. Page 7, Results paragraph 1, They worked in a ..... Who are they? All the GP’s, the principals, who?

20. If 10 GP’s were principals, how many were locums and other?

21. The fact that 77% of the sample was principle GP’s were not mentioned in the limitations section, but you explicitly state that the group of non-engagers were stratified to ensure a range of perspectives. Perhaps you should rephrase that sentence (page 5, last paragraph on the page)

22. Results, page 7, paragraph 1, make reference to Table 1.

23. An abbreviation may only be used after it has been written out in full - SEA - page 7, results, last paragraph.

24. The wording of the themes listed on page 7 does not correlate with the wording as they appear in the text further on in the article.
25. Present results within the framework of the research question.

26. On page 10, the heading "value of the peer review model" move to the next page.

27. Discussion, paragraph 1, page 15, an external peer review model, if this is the name of the model, all the words should be capitalised, i.e. External Peer Review Model.

28. Discussion, page 15, paragraph 3, third line: However, two of three activities are proposed..... which two?

29. page 16, abbreviations without clarifications, i.e. MSF, QOF and GMS

30. When strengths and limitations of the study are combined in one section, then clearly identify which are strengths and which are limitations when discussing them.

31. If strengths are mentioned first in the heading then strengths should be discussed first.

32. I do not think that it is necessary to indicate which researcher was the interviewer. (page 20, 2nd paragraph). Only refer to the researcher who did the interviews were....

33. A conclusion should answer the research question, bringing everything together. Only recommendations were made, which are not incorrect, this section should be rephrased.

34. Who provided the ethical approval for this study?

35. Change the heading of Table 1 - Table 1: Characteristics of the study participants: Personal, Professional & Educational

36. Presentation of the data within the table is inconsistent (Table 1, page 25)

37. Throughout the article reference is made to a GP, in the table reference is made to a doctor - use the same terminology throughout (Table 1, page 25)

38. clarify practice list size - number of patients. Registered patients, patients seen per day/month/year? (Table 1, page 25)

39. Use the same terminology in the table as in the text. (Table 1, page 25)

40. Involvement in training not Involvement in Training (Table 1, page 25)

41. See example of Table, improved outlay although not completed.

**Discretionary revisions**

1. Discussion, page 15, first paragraph, change first steps to something else, i.e. valuable information.

**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.