Reviewer's report

Title: The Alberta Ambassador Program: delivering Health Technology Assessment results to rural practitioners

Version: 1  Date: 24 January 2006

Reviewer: Pascale Lehoux

Reviewer's report:

General
This is a very well written paper, stemming from a modest but carefully conducted study. The topic is of high interest to the Health Technology Assessment community but will also raise the interest of scholars and practitioners working in the area of Knowledge Transfer. The authors provide a balanced analysis of their findings and make useful observations about the pedagogical strategies they implemented. Tables are clear and some represent a very useful complement to the text.

Authors may consider improving the manuscript before publication.

First, the abstract does not aptly convey the paper’s content. The background information is somewhat misleading (i.e., the sentence referring to the need to find information as a barrier is unclear, and does not reflect the focus of the paper) and the objectives of the study should be clearly stated.

Second, an explanation for why two Ambassadors (clinical and HTA) were conducting the workshops should be provided. This is not only an important modification to the Swedish model but it also carries major resource implications. Would the results have differed if only one Ambassador had been included?

Third, on p.9, results of the pre-workshop survey (on perceived ability to influence, motivations, encouragement to use evidence, etc.) are presented but the authors do not discuss their relevance or the links between these and the post-workshop survey results. Their discussion is largely focused on the post-workshop results. Authors may have to decide: Either these two surveys are intimately connected and helpful to understand the program's impact, or the post- findinds are sufficient in themselves?

Fourth, on p.14, it is mentioned that participants “were surprised by the non-conventional teaching methods”. At this stage in the manuscript, this observation is surprising given the authors’ efforts to deploy “established” KT and CME strategies. Does this mean that the strategies were not familiar to participants? Or is it something else that was deemed unfamiliar? It is also unclear whether this observation is based on the qualitative data, on the survey, or on unstructured debriefing with participants.

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

See the four comments above. There are a few typos as well.
What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests