Reviewer’s report

Title: Technology assessment and resource allocation for predictive genetic testing: A pilot study of the perspectives of Canadian genetic health care providers

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Reviewer: Jürgen Barth

Reviewer’s report:

This study present results of a very small interview study (N=16) of health professionals on resource allocation for genetic testing. The data were presented in a quantitative (frequencies) and in a qualitative way (selected parts of the interviews). Since genetic testing has become an important topic in health care the manuscript deals with an actual issue. However the scientific impact and the generalisability of the results are limited. Especially the used method of analysis is quite intransparent and the description of the results is lengthy and therefore main results do not emerge. This narrative style of reporting results should be more condensed to real important results.

Major comments

The authors should clearly state whether they had hypothesis, expectations etc. The interview guideline is introduced step by step in the result section. This makes it quite hard to understand what is really the goal of the study. A more top down approach coming from topics to results would be much more informative.

The method section does mainly contain information about recruitment which seems quite difficult. At the end 16 interviews were done. This self selection could be a problem but the confusing description of the selection process is the larger problem. Is there any information why the 15 other participants were not interviewed? Moreover the strategy of analysis is not described sufficiently. How did the authors deal with open questions? Have there been a code book? Was there a training of the coder?

The abstract is written very uninformative. The number of participants of the study should be added. It remains unclear whether this is only a pilot study or not. The results sections describes only the dimensions analysed without giving any concrete result. The conclusions “a national approach to allocation decisions in this context may be appropriate” is very broad. I was asking myself whether there are any health issues where a national approach is not appropriate.

Minor comments

Is this paper specifically written for the Canadian audience or are there any results with international perspective. What conclusions can be drawn for other countries?
I am not sure whether the figures are really required.

Are there any limitations of this “study”?  

Assuming this is a pilot study it would be interesting to get information about the conclusions for the main study. Or was this study just the preparation for the workshop. It would be helpful to get an idea about the overlap of participants of the study and the workshop. This could be a major threat for internal validity of the results.

The first sentence in the conclusions is not clear as genetic test are internationally not just a over the counter product (“commercially available”) like nicotine replacement of others.

Why where additional results presented in the conclusions?

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