Reviewer's report

Title: Anaesthetists' and surgeons' attitudes towards informed consent in the UK: a cross sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 14 September 2009

Reviewer: Owen A Anderson

Reviewer's report:

Discretionary Revisions

The aims of this questionnaire are set out by the statement:

‘Our primary hypothesis was that surgeons and anaesthetists would differ in their attitude to consent’

This statement seems not entirely surprising as there has been a long running discussion through the literature concerning consent for anaesthesia. Should the anaesthesia be consented for as part of the formal consent for surgery, or at a separate consent, in the presence of the anaesthetist?

It would be more relevant to ask as to whether a surgeons and an anaesthetists consent is up to standard, rather than comparing the different specialities.

Could the authors suggest potential reasons for the observed difference between anaesthetists and surgeons?

In view of the aims being not surprising, the conclusions are not surprising.

Minor Essential Revisions

Page 4 (bottom)

How was the questionnaire assessed for external and internal validity?

Page 8 (top) - Discussion line 2

The study has not ‘demonstrated’. The results of the study are X but this does not mean that X exists. This needs to be amended.

There may be a significant amount of reporter bias. Those interested in the process of consent may be more likely to respond. This needs to be mentioned.

Response rate is poor. (63%) this limitation needs to be mentioned.

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Guidelines for consent have been available from the Dept of Health for much longer than stated in the discussion.

Department of Health (UK). Good Practice in Consent Implementation Guide:
Available at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/Consent/ConsentGeneralInformation/fs/en

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**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**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