Reviewer's report

Title: An interdisciplinary team communication framework and its application to healthcare ‘e-teams’ systems design

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Reviewer: Carl May

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting and well written paper. The authors have founded their analysis of multi-disciplinary teams at work on a framework derived from Donabedian, and have used this framework to give structure to their qualitative (content) analysis of a series of observations of two team groups. What the paper provides is an interesting and theoretically oriented account that includes a broad taxonomy of communicative practice and explanations of their outcomes. My view is this stands on its own, and it leads to the central problems of (i) co-ordinating the negotiation and delivery of healthcare practices, and then (ii) organizing and mediating the practices of co-ordination themselves. I think this is itself reflected in the extent to which the discussion of data here reflects problems of co-ordinating practice delivery in (organizational) space (information is sometimes hard to find, people are somewhere else, stuff gets lost or put away)

Where I think the problem with this paper arises is in the connection between the ethnographic study and its recommendations for practice. There are very large bodies of literature on all three of those suggested here (data support; process facilitation; and real-time e-conferencing). All three seem to meet the requirements of problem (i), above, but there is abundant evidence that suggests that the combination of (i) and (ii) is itself a real problem and I don’t think the paper goes far enough in dealing with this. An unsympathetic reader might criticise the paper on this basis: the authors make the point that multi-disciplinary teamwork is not simply a technical problem of practice, but that it can be solved through the application of one or more technological fixes. I don’t think this is what the authors intended, but the paper can be read in this way and I think needs to be modified to deal with this problem.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Make a stringer link between the ethnographic component of the paper and its practice recommendations

2. Ensure that practice recommendations take into account the existing and abundant critical and ethnographic literature on data support; process facilitation; and real-time e-conferencing.

Minor Compulsory Revisions

1. Throughout the paper the importance of inter/multidisciplinary teamwork is
emphasised. I'm not always convinced by the argument that such work is uniquely safety critical (not all of the problems discussed here are critical in this way.

2. There is a substantial literature on inter/multidisciplinary teamwork itself that could be usefully referred to and which would give the recommendations made by the authors a good deal more punch.

**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'