Reviewer’s report

Title: A need for a multifaceted approach to guideline implementation: perceptions of oncology nurses

Version: 3 Date: 11 April 2011

Reviewer: Anna Gagliardi

Reviewer’s report:

This manuscript addresses an important health services research issue. While guidelines recommend appropriate care based on best available evidence they are often not used according to population based studies. This is a result of multiple factors, and it is essential to identify those factors for a given guideline to design relevant implementation strategies. This manuscript describes an analysis of issues influencing use of a particular guideline across several sites, which is an essential first step. Use of exploratory methods is also appropriate to gain an in-depth understanding of the issues. The study would have been strengthened through use of a theoretical framework to guide data collection and analysis, otherwise the findings are not unique, and of interest locally rather than broadly. The manuscript could be strengthened by clarifying relevant concepts in the Background and how this study addresses a particular gap in our knowledge of guideline implementation, including essential qualitative methodological details, and elaborating on implications in the Discussion.

MAJOR COMPULSORY

Introduction

A number of concepts introduced in the background could be better defined and linked to create a clear justification of the need for this study. For example, teamwork and multidisciplinary care are different, and both of those concepts differ from the fact that multiple factors influence whether and how guidelines are used. Moreover, the study is relevant to cancer guidelines, but background literature on teamwork and factors influencing guideline use in the context of cancer is not cited. Some key citations related to guideline implementation and views about guidelines, ie. Grimshaw, Brouwers are also not cited. The Intro concludes by saying that exploring clinician perceptions is the focus for this study but does not explain why individual views are more relevant than other intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence guideline use.

Methods

There are no citations for the methods used. Under Design the authors might indicate the methods used. Sampling sounds more like convenience than theoretical sampling...if theoretical sampling was used what attributes/units was it based on? How was data saturation determined? How did the experienced researcher verify the analysis? Even for a grounded theory study the focus group questions would be informed by a theoretical framework, perhaps related to
perceptions or other factors influencing guideline use but this is absent. A theoretical framework would clarify whether perceptions are the key issue being explored. The Results would suggest otherwise.

Results
It would be helpful to see a table that lists and defines the coding scheme. Terminology remains confusing, ie. multidisciplinary, multilevel, multifaceted. The purpose was to identify problems and solutions, but only problems seem to be listed. All quotes should be identified by an anonymous code so that the reader knows that data came from multiple participants with a range of attributes according to theoretical sampling, and not just one or two individuals. The authors state that the participants were asked to suggest solutions but none of those quotes are included.

Discussion
While the study identified numerous factors influence guideline use in this particular setting, these issues are not novel. If a theoretical framework had been used, then the investigators may have been able to probe more deeply to explore particular problems and identify potential feasible solutions. For example, format and content of guidelines is noted as a problem, but there is no mention of AGREE, a tool which supports development of high quality guidelines. The authors note that the findings are consistent with previous studies but cite few such studies and do not elaborate how. Much of the Discussion is a summary of the Results without examining the implications for policy, practice and ongoing research. The overall recommendation is a multifaceted approach...what would this consist of?

MINOR ESSENTIAL
The manuscript is fairly well written and organized, but some grammatical editing is required.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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