Reviewer’s report

Title: The challenges of communicating research evidence within a patient-centred health care culture: perspectives from UK health visitors and practice nurses

Version: 3 Date: 26 February 2013

Reviewer: Alison Kitson

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Assessment criterion Referee’s assessment

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
Whilst the paper has improved considerably from the first version, I am still not quite sure what it’s trying to do. Is it a descriptive account of the challenges faced by community nurses (HVs and PNs) in using evidence? Or is it an exploratory study looking at whether HVs and PNs have similar challenges? I think the patient centred care title is not relevant. A more authentic discussion ought to be around how the nurses saw their role in building trust in relationships that would enable them to engage in deeper conversations with patients around evidence.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? yes

3. Are the data sound? Still have concerns about the method of collecting the sample. Given there is around 25,000 nurses in the UK who would be working in the community, it’s not clear what the researchers wanted to achieve by interviewing so few. How many did they aim for and what geographical spread were they hoping for.

The analysis and presentation of data is acceptable

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? In Table 1 would it be possible to get information on education level; length of time in the role and whether they worked full time or part time. These have been found to be important factors that impact on nurses’ confidence in using evidence.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Still think the authors need to acknowledge the limitations of the recruitment process; the reality that HVs and practice nurses in the UK context do very different jobs – HVs will visit patients’ homes as well as run clinics whilst PNs typically do their work in a health centre. These factors will affect relationships with patients and need to be acknowledged. Also, in terms of making the findings relevant to an international
audience, the authors need to describe what sort of roles these two groups of nurses undertake so that international readers can make relevant comparisons.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?  Yes

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes. The challenges of communicating research evidence within a patient-centred health care culture: perspectives from UK health visitors and practice nurses. I suggest the authors omit reference to the patient centred health care culture. They have not made a case for how patient centred care would be operationalised in the community and given the time of data collection it is less likely. I think they have a stronger case to argue for the sort of characteristics that make up a positive relationship between the community nurse and patient, particularly around trust, and ability to provide relevant information. I also think the authors should consider how they strengthen the conclusions. They do make a good case in terms of identifying key issues that impact on community nurses – issues around their own preparation, skills and training; issues around patient characteristics; and the context where the encounter is enacted. If the authors were able to strengthen their concluding comments around these areas, I think the paper would make more sense to practitioners and be more helpful in identifying what might need to be done to improve things.

9. Is the writing acceptable? Yes

An article of limited interest
Acceptable level of English
'I declare that I have no competing interests'
Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions