Reviewer’s report

Title: Exploring types of focused factories in hospital care: a case study approach

Version: 1 Date: 2 July 2009

Reviewer: Thomas Plochg

Reviewer’s report:

General comments:
I believe that your study might be very interesting and relevant for the readership of BMC health services research. However, as a reader I encountered really difficulties in following the logic of the paper. In my view, your paper suffers from poor structure. So, I recommend the editors to invite you to make Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached) to your manuscript.

(I know that my comments are direct and may sound harsh. However, I want to be constructive in order to gives you some clues how to improve the paper.)

Major compulsory revisions
- If I understand the abstract right, the aim of the manuscript is to explore the concept of ‘focused factory’ as applied in hospital care in order to better define or refine it (i.e., to come up with a new typology). The multiple case study provides empirical data to support that typology. This method is appropriate for the study objective. But, I would expect that the results section presents the typology supported by the empirical data. In the current manuscript the typology is presented in the discussion. In my view not the right place. Now the study has more a descriptive nature describing different focused factories in hospital care. So, what is the objective of your study?
- The structure of the background section is now unclear, especially the extra paragraph with the heading ‘lessons from manufacturing and services’. It might be better to reverse the order. First introducing the concept of focused factory, its definition and conceptualisation in business and then focusing on hospital care explaining that current definitions should be refined.
- In the final paragraph of the background section (page 6), the organizational context and organizational performance are introduced while these concepts are not problematised in the background section.
- The methods sections lacks important information on the methodology of the study. What is the rationale behind the sampling strategy. What hospitals are selected for what reasons? It would be helpful if the sample is presented in a table. Furthermore, the structure is unclear. Normally, a methods section is structured around the sampling, data collection, analysis. It is now hard to find out what method has actually been applied.
- In the results section empirical data are presented in four fields and one cross-case analysis. This way of presenting the results is really a pity. While reading it I lost overview; far too many headings and difficult to read. It might be helpful to use tables to be much more concise and focused in presenting the 18 cases.

- I presume that you have a lot of data. Show them! You make statements but I cannot find any empirical data supporting them.

- I suggest to introduce here the typology supported by the empirical data from the 18 cases.

- Given the previous comments, the discussion must be adjusted accordingly.

Minor compulsory comments
- The abstract is too long.

**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.