Reviewer’s report

Title: Geriatric Day Hospital: opportunity or threat? A qualitative exploratory study of the referral behaviour of Belgian general practitioners.

Version: 1 Date: 25 March 2010

Reviewer: Horst Vollmar

Reviewer’s report:

In general, it reflects an inappropriate or ineffective implementation strategy by the Belgish government.

Major Revisions:

• Methods: Very short. Please expand this section.
• Methods (line 59): “observation form” What was observed? There is nothing about the observation in the result or the discussion section. Why not?
• Procedure: Why the differences in recruitment in the Dutch and the French speaking part?
• Why mixed groups in one part and different groups in the other part?
• Line 71-72: “…data saturation was reached.” How defined?
• Analysis (line 83): What kind of method? Grounded theory, Mayring, other method? How? Where is the observation? Why only one researcher? (bias possible!)
• Please add something like that to the limitations: “only one researcher for each part, a team would have been a better strategy for analyzing the results”.
• Strengths and limitations (line 07): Why was the analysis of both groups was quasi unisonous?
• Please add more experiences from other countries (comparison). Do they have the same problems? (I am quite sure). What are the implications for further research and implementation projects?
• Table 3: How do you develop these categories?

Minor Essential Revisions:

• Background (line 45 and 46): “…, only 40% of the patients…” How many patients?
• Background (line 45-47): A description in detail would be helpful. Some data about the average physician-patient contact (patients per day)? What is the “average” referred rate?
• I would prefer more and newer references in the discussion part of the manuscript.
• Conclusion (line 49-51): I suggest to eliminate the sentence “A top down
approach is not successful”. If not, please add some further evidence for that thesis.

• Ethics vote?

Discretionary Revisions:
• Please introduce the abbreviation GDH in the background section (line 28).
• Please introduce the abbreviation FGD in the tables.