Reviewer's report

Title: Public views on a wait time management initiative: a matter of communication

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Reviewer: Nils Schneider

Reviewer's report:

Overall impression
Findings of two qualitative studies on public views regarding wait time management in Ontario, Canada, are presented. Overall, this is an interesting manuscript relevant for health services research and health policy, but it needs revisions.

- Major Compulsory Revisions
1) Abstract: The statement that recommendations have been developed is no conclusion. Concretely, what are the authors` conclusions (for health policy, practice, research, others) based on the empirical findings in this study?
2) Aims: I can`t identify a clear research question. I gain the impression that the study has an explorative approach. Maybe the authors could make their initial points more explicit.
3) Methods: The authors refer to Grounded Theory by Strauss and Corbin. To my opinion the approach in this study is by no means Grounded Theory. The analytic strategy as it is described in the paper is appropriate but should not be named Grounded Theory. As far as I can see the authors used Qualitative Content Analysis and Qualitative Description. It may be useful to consider a paper by Neergaard et al., Qualitative description, BMC Medical Research Methodology 2009;9:52.
4) The data set consisted of 116 emails (all emails received from Dec 2005 – Sept 2007). The number seems to be low in a 2 year period, however, I have no comparison. It may be helpful for international readers who are not familiar with the health system in Ontario if the authors further discuss the utilization of the OWTS website and the email option, also considering socio-demographics of the users (age, social status …). Older people and people with low social status are likely to make less use of email services. I would appreciate if these aspects are further addressed in the limitation section.
5) Results: What are the criteria for the selection of the quotes presented? Regarding the emails, is every quote from another individual? With respect to the interview participants, their basic socio-demographic data should be described in a table together with an identification number, and the number should be referred to when quotes are presented in the manuscript to better inform the reader.
6) Discussion, page 18, table 1: Ways for improving public engagement in wait
time management are suggested, based on the findings of this study and a previous study. However, it is unclear how these recommendations were developed. For example, did an expert workshop take place? By no means, the recommendations in table 1 are adequately supported by the data presented in this study. The mix of findings from this and a previous study is not comprehensible. For the conclusions it would be better to stay closer to the empirical data gained in this study. Alternatively, if the authors prefer to integrate the findings of previously research to develop their recommendations in table 1, they need to provide more information concerning the previous research, and to explain the way they developed the recommendations.

- Minor Essential Revisions

7) Please check the numeration of references (e.g. Ref 22, page 4, seems to be Ref 26 in the reference list)

8) Ethics: Did persons who wrote an email know that this might be used for research?

9) Page 7: How many individuals were invited for an interview but did not participate, and for what reasons? Were individuals excluded from interviews if they had written an email to the OWTS website before (no duplication)?

**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.