Reviewer's report

Title: The effect of linking community health centers to a state-level smoker's quitline on rates of cessation assistance

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Reviewer: Svein Hoegh H Henrichsen

Reviewer's report:

One of the problems facing smoking cessation activities is implementation of guidelines. Linking providers with a quitline seems to be an easy way to spare providers time, but there are pitfalls: the cessation effort is less personal and the main question is the impact of such an activity. I am concerned by the tendency to abbreviate the 4As, forgetting ARRANGE. I believe the best smoking cessation is provided by the primary care physician assisted by other members of the staff and/or supported by quitlines or phone calls from staff.

This paper shows that cessation activity (measured by increase in prescriptions) increases with more intensive education of staff and perhaps with the possibility of an easy referral. Looking at the increase in referrals this was not significant. The method used might increase the referrals as well - patient were interviewed after the consultation and thus adherence and determination to quit might increase as an effect of the interviews.

As the authors point out there are several follow-up questions to be answered on the impact of the referrals and whether the provider/CHC should refer patients or provide more follow-up themselves. I think the authors should discuss the effect of not prompting providers to follow up their patients themselves (ARRANGE)

The paper clearly shows an increase in smoking cessation activity as an effect of increased provider/staff education.

Sentences are a bit too long and unpresise.

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

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