Reviewer's report

Title: What is known about the patient's experience of medical tourism? A scoping review

Version: 1 Date: 30 May 2010

Reviewer: Magdalene Rosenmoller

Reviewer's report:

It is with great interest, that I have read the article on “What is known about the patient’s experience of medical tourism? A scoping review”. There are no major or essential, but a few discretionary revisions, mainly the lack of well stated conclusions from the review, the lengthy and somehow repetitive description of the methodology and some repetitions in other places of the text, thus, the article could gain from some revisions and shortening.

1 Research question - The authors identify the research questions well, well stating its focus and scope: a review of existing literature on medical tourism.

2 Methodology - A straightforward and sound methodology builds on referenced proven research methods. However, the methodology section is very lengthy, where large descriptions do not add much value. Here the article could gain from shortening.

3 Sound data - there are no primary data, though it could have been of benefit to include some data / articles reflecting the extent of the problem of medical tourism. As the article focuses on Canada – it would have bee interesting to get some idea on how many patients seek treatment abroad, maybe even comparing it to neighboring USA.

4 Standards for reporting and data deposition - Not applicable – as this is a literature review.

5 Conclusions - Discussion and conclusions could be formulated more in terms of what the literature review really revealed – it is somehow surprising to read again a lengthy description of the starting point of the research, instead of statements reflecting the findings of the review.

6 Limitation stated - Limitations of the article and the research are stated but could have been described more explicitly, eg. industry and government reports from non–English speaking countries available in English are said to have been included but no examples are given. It is mentioned that the literature review is limited to Canada –some general reference are included, but some very relevant are missing, particularly those who have already done a similar literature review in different settings (US, Europe).

7 Work built on - There is an impressive list of references, which seems to have been well reviewed following a sound methodology. However, the stated limitations have retained them to included important state of the art in the field. Here more of the relevant literature could have been included, such as work by
HBS professor Regina Herzlinger (US), a reference for this debate in the US. Also one would have expected the inclusion of some of the related associations, such as the Medical Tourism and Travel Developers Group on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com), the International Medical Travel Journal www.imtj.com, or the European Medical Travel Conference 2010 www.emtc2010.com.

8 Title and Abstract - The titles is fine, but the abstract could be more concise – really reflecting the findings from the article review, it merely reflects the (very good) framework of analysis but fails to state in a concise way what are the main findings from the exercise. It starts by mentioning the need for further research – but the knowledge base from the review exercise, on which further research could build - is not clearly stated.

9 Writing - Writing a bit lengthy and a few avoidable repetitions, the methodology is described in lengths in several places. Once is enough and could then be referred to in other places of the text. In general language could be more concise, otherwise good.

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 in relation to the reviewed article.