Reviewer's report

Title: Patient safety culture lives in departments and wards: Multilevel partitioning of variance in patient safety culture

Version: 2 Date: 19 February 2010

Reviewer: Christine Holzmueller

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript is substantially improved from its original version and much easier to follow. I have minor but essential revisions:

1. Background, paragraph 3, sentence 2: I disagree with the statement that surveying safety culture "is not always the best strategy." If your staff are not cognizant of safety as they deliver care, patients will be at increased risk of an error. While I could add to this argument, I think this phrase should be deleted. As the authors state in the rest of this sentence, if safety culture is low improvement interventions will not last.

2. Methods section
   a. Data collection: In paragraph 1, the second sentence starting "the questionnaire was distributed...neurology and ear-nose-throat." should be moved to the Setting and participants subsection. ALSO, the remainder of that paragraph in my mind should go in results, but I defer to the editorial staff to decide.

   b. Data collection: In paragraph 2, line 4, rephrase: "..attend the staff meeting were sent [rather than had their] SAQs.." ALSO, next to the last sentence in this paragraph about response rates, again I feel it this should be in Results section.

   c. Statistical analysis: Paragraph 1, with the exception of last statement about procedure used to calculate scores, should be moved to the The survey subsection earlier in methods. ALSO, that last statement about calculating scores should be described briefly here instead of making the reader go to another paper.

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.