Reviewer's report

Title: Health Information Management and Care Quality for Children Assisted with Tracheotomy: A Qualitative Study

Version: 1 Date: 12 October 2010

Reviewer: Rhonda Cady

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The manuscript has two objectives that are exploratory in nature and fit well within the qualitative framework. The questions posed by these objectives have been discussed in the literature by multiple authors (Strickland, 2004; Bethell, 2004; Lutenbacher, 2005) using a variety of research methodologies. The manuscript confirms the findings of these earlier studies. Unfortunately, the manuscript does not acknowledge this important prior work.

2. The current manuscript and questions in Table 1 give the appearance that identical questions were used for both the semi-structured interviews and focus groups. These are two very different qualitative methodologies and as such, utilize different data collection (questions) and data analysis techniques. I would encourage the authors to review Krueger RA, Casey MA. Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research. Sage Publications, Inc. 2000: 3rd Edition.

3. It appears to this reviewer that the methodologies used for qualitative data collection were actually individual and group semi-structured interviews, not individual semi-structured interview and focus groups. The methodologies section should be rewritten to reflect this.

4. Interoperability and health information exchange (HIE) are important topics that need to be addressed. This manuscript confirms the need for continued research in these areas. However, until the complexity of HIE is resolved, a sharable record is needed. What could the manuscript offer as alternatives? This would strengthen the discussion.

5. My main concern with this manuscript is the lack of knowledge that it contributes to health informatics research and care coordination research. The findings have been discussed elsewhere. Incorporating the reviewer comments could strengthen this manuscript for publication. I leave that decision to the editors.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. A key component of qualitative analysis is verifying the results with participants. The manuscript does not address whether this occurred and if not, why. As mentioned above, the findings are consistent with the literature.
However, this method of determining the external validity or ‘fittingness’ as defined by Lincoln and Guba (1995), is not mentioned.

2. The main findings of these manuscript warrant publication as they address a situation prevalent among all children with complex health care needs, not just children with tracheotomy. What the findings address is a lack of overall care coordination for this population. The AAP includes care coordination as a key component of a pediatric medical home but does not address how or if this impacts the results. The literature has shown that implementing care coordination for complex children can is hampered by a lack of reimbursement. Incorporating this issue into the manuscript would strengthen the discussion.

Discretionary Revisions

None


**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