Reviewer's report

Title: Psychiatry out-of-hours: a focus group study of GPs' experiences in Norwegian casualty clinics.

Version: 1 Date: 20 February 2011

Reviewer: Carolyn Chew-Graham

Reviewer's report:

General comments:
The topic is of importance.
The title and abstract are appropriate.
The standard of English is acceptable.

Specific comments:
Background
The literature review is satisfactory. The authors describe the Norwegian health care system in some detail, which helps the reader understand the context of the study.

Methods
The methods section briefly outlines recruitment, data collection and analysis.
The authors use the term ‘focus group interviews’ when they mean ‘focus groups’.
Using pre-established peer groups as focus groups limits the usefulness of the data collected as participants may give ‘public accounts’ to preserve relationships within the group.
There is limited description of the topic guide. It is not clear what ‘An episode which had an unexpected positive turn’ means.

Results
The results are presented in a fairly descriptive manner with the themes predictable from the topic guide. There does not seem to be any theoretical underpinning to the analysis.

More could have been made of the statement ‘Although rare, occasional outbursts of open disagreement occurred’.

Each main theme might have been explored in more depth and sub-headings used to present sub-themes. The authors take at face value what the respondents say and have not tried to look for underlying meaning to the data.

Discussion
Because there was consensus across groups does not mean that the ‘findings might be valid for most Norwegian GPs.’

The limitation of interviewing one’s peers is recognized, but the limitation of conducting focus groups with pre-established groups is not mentioned.

Conclusion

The sentence ‘Present organisation of casualty clinics in Norway is suboptimal for providing emergency mental healthcare’ is not really a conclusion of this qualitative study. Similarly, the authors suggest that making certain changes, may improve ‘quality’ of patient care – again, such a conclusion cannot be drawn from this study.

Compulsory revisions:

The data needs to be re-analysed, moving from a purely descriptive approach to a more in-depth analysis, linking with theory, and exploring the meaning of the data collected.

The discussion and conclusion will need to be re-visited in the light of the revised Results.

**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.