Reviewer's report

Title: Paucity of qualitative research in general medical and health services and policy research journals: Analysis of publication rates

Version: 2 Date: 26 April 2011

Reviewer: Jonathan DeShazo

Reviewer's report:

I appreciate you taking the time and effort to address my concerns. Given the current existing literature on the prevalence of qualitative research (Wiener, Hoff and Witt, etc.) and the known limitations of Medline indexing, in my opinion this current revision has still not adequately addressed the important considerations around validity. If there is published literature out there that looks at the same journals during the same time period yet has wildly different results, I believe the burden is on the authors to explain/justify/address the differences. By clarifying your methods as you did somewhat, this helps. If you reported your validation results, this would also help, but you felt this is not important. Somehow you expect your readers to take your word for it that in this case Medline indexing is like hand searching.

For the same time period you count Health Affairs at 1.1% qualitative compared to Weiner's 35%. (30 times your findings) You count Health Services Research 1.8% and they count 12%. To me, these differences are significant and require exploring in the paper. Yet your treatment of that particular paper in the background was very shallow.

I recognize that my concerns are not shared by the other reviewers (which is why we have multiple reviewers). However, I feel like these two issues are still outstanding( 1. why your results differ so much from the two major works like this, particularly the one during the same time period. and 2. your validation numbers so readers can feel like the Medline results are accurate)

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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