Reviewer's report

Title: Factors affecting the use of patient survey data for quality improvement in the Veterans Health Administration

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Reviewer: Sjenny Winters

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Review manuscript:

Factors affecting the use of patient survey data for quality improvement in the Veterans Health Administration

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Reviewer’s report:

The goal of the study was to access factors that were barriers to, or promoters of, efforts to improve care experiences in VA facilities.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. In general, it is a nice study, but too thin. The main point of the manuscript is the focus of the study. Why is only the emotional support dimension focus of the study? Is the score on this dimension representative for the performance as whole?

2. Are VA surgery facilities selected on high or low performance on one dimension? Is the same trend visible for high and low performance on other dimensions or only on the emotional support dimension?

3. Can conclusions of organizational, professional and data-related promoters or barriers, been given on only one dimension?

4. Another point is the methodology of the study. Why are case studies selected with stable high scores and stable low scores? An alternative way is to investigate the case which makes the most improvements and to determine which promoters and barriers were seen in this process.

5. Last point is the limited participation of the facilities (only two) and the small amount of interviews in the facilities. How was the internal consistency in content between interviewees.

More in detail:

Abstract

6. The title ‘Rationale’ is not clear.
7. Not only barriers were determined, also promoters were detected.

Method section
8. Give more support on your decision to choose these hypotheses. It is unclear why these hypotheses were formulated. Please emphasize the hypotheses and relate the hypotheses to the research questions. How was the hypotheses testing done?

Results section
9. It is not clear what the culture of patient-centeredness contains.
10. In general, too many words are necessary which makes the result part of the manuscript ‘too slow to read’ and difficult to get the point.
11. There is a misbalance between the use of word and the way of presentation of organizational promoters and barriers.
12. The step from ‘promoters and barriers’ to ‘deducing facility performing status’ is too large. Summarize the findings in a box is alternative way, which bridged the gap.

Discussion
13. What is meant by …we found some evidence… (p. 18)?
14. It is not complete clear what the answers are on the goals of the study, formulated in the background.
15. The hypotheses were not discussed clear.

Discretionary Revisions:
• P.8.: Figure1. it is not a figure. Perhaps box 1?
• P.9.: enumerate the hypotheses 1) till 5).

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.