Reviewer's report

Title: Situating STI Service Delivery - A Discourse Analysis

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Reviewer: Catherine Mercer

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1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?

This is an interesting paper that uses qualitative methods to examine how the knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of STI (sexually transmitted infections) service providers in British Columbia, Canada, influence STI service delivery there. Given the challenges of providing effective sexual health care, and the public health implications of not doing so, it is a worthy question to study.

The Background section of the paper is well-structured. However, I think the authors need to acknowledge that the data they present on STI incidence refer to diagnosed incidence. E.g. 1st sentence: “The diagnosed incidence of…”; 3rd sentence: “…the diagnosed rate of infection increased….”; 4th sentence: “…the highest rates of diagnosed Chlamydia…” etc.

…and so changes over time in the diagnosed incidence may in part reflect changes in the availability of STI testing and population of those testing.

I also think that the Background should ‘set the scene’ for the paper beyond British Colombia and Canada; BMC HSR has an international readership and so the paper needs to relate to readers outside of BC and Canada. For example, as someone outside of Canada, the mention on p.5 of “Options for Sexual Health” means nothing to me.

Similarly, when presenting the quotes, I agree that it is helpful to “identify the location of the provider worked, in order to situate the findings” (p.9), but I think it would be more helpful to describe the type of service where the provider worked in, rather than give the geographical place name.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?

The qualitative methods used seem appropriate and the level of detail provides the non-qualitative reader with sufficient information to comprehend how the data were collected and analysed. The authors say on p.7 that they used “an interview guide consisting of semi-structured questions”; I think it would be helpful to include this as an appendix for the interested reader.

It would also be helpful to know the year that the interviews were undertaken as currently the authors just refer to “At the time of the interview, …” (p.5), “At the time,...” (p.6), “When the original study was conducted,...” (p.6).
3. Are the data sound?
The data appear to me to be sound. Ethical approvals are clearly stated in the Methods and there do not appear to be any conflict of interests.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
I think so.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
The authors identify 3 themes that emerge from their interviews, and which are reported with quotes that support these themes. These themes do not seem to be unique to providing STI care for youth, and so I think the authors should comment on the potential broader implications of these findings.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
Yes, although not until the final paragraph. Perhaps these need to be elaborated in the main body of the paper? In particular, I think the authors need to have greater acknowledgement throughout the paper that their data and thus findings relate just to service providers in BC, Canada.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
At the start of the Methods, the authors state how the paper under review is part of a larger study, and they cite a previously published paper (reference #24).

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
• I think the title is a little vague so should be clarified, and also the geographical context of the paper should be stated in the title.
• In the Abstract’s Background section, the authors should reword “…for individuals with sexually transmitted infections…” to “…for individuals seeking care for sexually transmitted infections…”
• In the Abstract, I think more detail is required in the Methods section, e.g. semi-structured in-depth interviews with 21 service providers working in [specify types of setting] in British Colombia, Canada.
• In the Abstract’s conclusion, the authors refer to ‘system’ 3 times; but this is not mentioned in the body of the paper so the Abstract’s conclusion doesn’t seem to fit with the rest of the paper. The authors should re-word the Abstract’s conclusion so it is more cohesive with the paper as a whole.

**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.