**Reviewer's report**

**Title:** Variations in risk perceptions: A qualitative study of why unnecessary urinary catheter use continues to be problematic

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 28 December 2012

**Reviewer:** Carolyn Tarrant

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This paper reports findings from a large ethnographic study of the implementation of a patient safety intervention: the Bladder Bundle. The study appears to be well conducted, and has generated interesting data. However I suggest the following as major compulsory revisions:

1. The description of sampling is long and this makes it difficult for the reader to see how many interviews in total were conducted; this needs to be condensed and focused. There were 42 interviews but how many staff in total were interviewed?

2. More details of the analysis approach are required. Were all transcripts open coded? At what point was data saturation reached? How were themes generated from the initial open codes?

3. My main concern about this work is use of a theoretical framework to organise the findings. There is a risk with this approach that data is forced into categories and that the understanding generated from the data is limited. Although the authors do identify ways in which their data diverges from the pre-existing framework, I feel their interpretation of the data is restricted by the use of the framework. The authors clearly have some excellent data which shed light on the role of perceptions of risk, and other factors, in the implementation of the Bladder bundle. This paper would be much improved if the authors reported their findings descriptively in relation to grounded themes that emerge from their data, rather than using a pre-existing ‘risk’ framework. For example, in the findings, rather than using the category ‘normative work’, the authors should consider what interesting points are being made here – i.e. multiple and conflicting perceptions of risk are evident. The perceived risks associated with catheter use are not just related to infection, and catheters can both be a source of risk, and a means of protecting against risk. Similarly, the theme process weakness seems an awkward fit with the data – this theme is less about risk and more about issues such as lack of consensus about indicators, and lack of fit with local context. Following the descriptive findings, the authors could then relate their interpretation of their data to the Dixon-Woods framework in the discussion, and discuss how their findings correspond to, differ from, and expand this earlier framework.
**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