Reviewer’s report

Title: Understanding public preferences for avoiding health losses caused by lapses in healthcare safety and patient lifestyle choices

Version: 1 Date: 9 November 2012

Reviewer: Simon J Palfreyman

Reviewer’s report:

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

As currently written it is not clear what the authors were seeking to answer and there needs to be a clearer explanation within the introduction. There does not seem to be a clear conclusion of whether the authors have understood the reasoning of the participants and how representative this maybe.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?

Yes. Although more detail in terms of generation of the framework and contextualisation of the data needs to be presented.

3. Are the data sound?

The authors should seek to describe the strengths and limitations of the data they present. They should also explore and expand on how they have addressed issues of truthfulness, rigour and quality of the data.

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

Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

Yes

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?

No these need to be made more explicit.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?

Yes there is some limited discussion of other work.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

Yes

9. Is the writing acceptable?
There are some minor typographical errors.

Major compulsory revisions

1. The choice of the scenarios for valuation needs to be made more explicit in the background. For example it is not clear why a valid comparison or choice could be made between hospital acquired infection (HAI), medication errors and injuries to NHS staff. What were the authors seeking to examine? The first two are included within the NHS policy analysis and concern patients or potential patients but injury to staff is a non-patient related issue.

2. The authors need to provide more context regarding the study. For example they need to make clear whether the study to examine the qualitative data was a priori? Were the participants informed that their textual data would be analysed? These could have influenced the richness of the data provided, and also the interpretation and analysis of the data.

3. The authors also need to provide more details in regard to the contexts of HAI and lifestyle related diseases. These are potentially very broad areas and would include pneumonias, UTIs etc in the former and smoking, obesity etc in the latter. Were these made explicit or left to the participants to ascribe?

4. The qualitative data analysis seems to be rather superficial in terms of presenting the results of deeper analysis related to the participants age, gender, location etc. Could the authors present these or refer to any differences?

5. The presentation of the results does not seek to triangulate or explain the data presented. Was this because there was no potential for doing this or that there was a lack of information on which to base this?

6. The coding framework as presented appears to arise spontaneously with little reporting on how this framework was constructed and tested.

7. Within the results section the wording and context of the medication vs genetic disorders and staff injury vs genetic disorders needs explanation or modification. The authors refer to a service to prevent medication errors or staff injury compared to a service to prevent genetic disorders. Is this a valid comparison? Surely the NHS has a limited capacity to prevent genetic disorders?

8. The findings that HAIs were given a premium over the other areas with staff injuries down at the bottom could have been discerned from the start as the comparisons were not clearly comparable based on the descriptions provided in the manuscript and the authors need to justify these more clearly.

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.