Reviewer's report

Title: Inter-jurisdictional cooperation on pharmaceutical product listing agreements: lessons from Canada

Version: 1 Date: 20 November 2012

Reviewer: Jane Robertson

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting manuscript addressing an issue affecting jurisdictions worldwide. My comments perhaps reflect personal preferences, however I felt the manuscript was long and a bit repetitive in parts and I am not sure it fulfils its title of 'lessons from Canada'. If it is meant to be lessons learned from the pilot of three drugs, the results and observations do not read this way. In my view there is relatively little anchoring in the experience with the three medicines (only one is named), despite the stated aim of ‘reviewing experience to date’. The questions in the interview guide ask broad questions and seek opinions on the process rather than on experiences.

To me, the paper reads more like an investigation of why inter-jurisdictional co-operation is unlikely to be successful. While these observations may be important, they might be better framed under an alternative question such as the challenges or barriers to the implementation of a policy initiative. As portrayed in the manuscript, the starting point for the work seems to be the pan-Canadian initiative that is in place. However, this is not reflected in the interview guide.

Beyond these general observations:

1. The phrase “extent that PLAs concern the evaluation of clinical effectiveness in real world environments”(p5) is a little opaque. I presume the authors mean that the terms of the PLA relate to guaranteed health outcomes with medicines use i.e. pay for actual clinical performance.

2. Some of the conclusions read more like an essay of investigators’ views rather than flowing from the views expressed in the study.

3. The abstract should indicate the actual number of people interviewed. It reads as though there could be multiple participants from each province, in fact there was only one from each. The small number of people interviewed is a substantial limitation of the study. There are concerns about the representativeness of the views expressed.

4. The abstract refers to international lessons – in my view the international perspective is not well developed in the manuscript.

Overall I think the manuscript would benefit from some reorganisation and shortening. In my view these are major compulsory revisions.
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.