Reviewer’s report

Title: Barriers to the implementation of preconception care guidelines as perceived by general practitioners: A qualitative study

Version: 1 Date: 20 November 2012

Reviewer: Ann McKillop

Reviewer’s report:

This very well-written article makes an important and useful contribution to knowledge to inform the complexities of implementing guidelines into practice. The aim is well-defined; methods appropriate; standards of reporting, discussion and conclusions well-founded; and writing conventions are adhered to. I have a few suggestions to further strengthen the article.

Discretionary Revisions

1. In the methods section, the intention is stated that opinions were sought that reflected diverse practice settings. The description of participants included high and low SES, male/female and rural (5 practices or do you mean 5 GPs?). The total number of practices is not provided so that the number of urban practices cannot be deduced.

2. The schedule of questions provided in Table 1 totals 27 under 12 domains. This seems a large number for a focus group to consider within 90 minutes. Did all focus groups respond to all questions?

3. Content analysis was applied to the data and found to be suitable for just 4 of the 12 domains. Does this mean there were no data that could be assigned to any of the remaining 8 domains and if so what does this mean for the validity of the 12 domain framework?

4. In the background and discussion sections, there is no reference to the importance of a culture of effectiveness including team-based solutions to barriers rather than the focus of the article on the behaviours of individual clinicians. It would be useful to discuss the tension between individual vs collective approaches to solution-finding in general practice settings.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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