Reviewer's report

Title: The barriers and facilitators influencing speech pathologists’ use of stroke clinical practice guidelines: a national descriptive study

Version: 1 Date: 3 October 2013

Reviewer: Tami Howe

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. The research paper describes a survey of speech pathologists’ experiences with using stroke clinical practice guidelines (CPGs) and their perceptions of the factors that influence the implementation of these guidelines. The manuscript addresses an innovative and important area of research that contributes to our understanding of how the implementation of CPGs can be improved within the field of speech pathology. My specific comments include:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. On p. 9, the authors state that one of the aims of the study was to “conduct a preliminary mapping of speech pathologists’ implementation of stroke CPGs onto the KTA framework.” The only information provided in the Method section about how this aim was addressed is on p. 12: “Key results were mapped onto the KTA framework as a way to further conceptualise the results.” There is no information provided re: the specific steps involved in and reliability of this mapping process. It seems that, rather than being a distinct aim, this is really more of a contextualization of the results that should be considered within the Discussion section. Therefore, it is also recommended that the mapping results on page 22 be omitted and instead that the results be discussed within the context of the KTA framework in the Discussion section. It is also noted that this mapping aim was not included as one of the aims of the study in the abstract on p. 2.

2. The abstract refers to “patient characteristics” as one of the factors identified within the survey results. Furthermore, on p.26 in the Discussion, the authors discuss “Factors relating to characteristics of the patient” as if it is one of the key findings of the paper and on p. 56 “Patient characteristics” is mapped to “Access barriers to knowledge use.” However, there is no specific subsection that refers to a group of factors called “patient characteristics” in the Results section.

3. The analysis process for the open ended responses should be described in more detail (including an example) in the Method section on p. 11.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The reference to three specific strategies that “help the implementation of stroke CPGs” in the Results section of the abstract on p. 2 is confusing for the reader as it highlights “strategies” as if it was a broad category of findings. Rather than stating: “(e) types of implementation strategies provided. Strategies reported
to help the implementation of stroke CPGS included educational meetings and resources, audit and feedback, and support from colleagues”; the authors could omit this reference to specific strategies here or reword this section (e.g., “(e) types of implementation strategies provided (e.g., educational meetings and resources, audit and feedback and support from colleagues were identified as useful”).

2. p. 4: Need to include a reference for: “Globally, around 15 million people suffer a stroke year year.”

3. p. 5: Why has “(and facilitators)” been placed in brackets in “d) assessing barriers (and facilitators)…”?

4. p. 6: “the (a) guideline itself,…” should be: “(a)the guideline.”

5. p. 7: “may not be the same as allied health professionals” should be: “may not be the same as those that influence allied health professionals.”

6. p. 8: Need to shorten and reword the awkward long sentence beginning: “For example, in relation to the work environment, allied health professionals…”

7. p. 8: Replace “were rarely addressed by physiotherapists” with “were rarely identified by physiotherapists.”

8. p. 10: Should include an example of a filter question here: “Following this consultation, filter questions …”

9. p. 10: Omit “a” in “and in a metropolitan, rural, and remote areas…”

10. p. 13 - 22: In this section it would be helpful if the authors could identify the specific survey questions the sub-headings correspond to (e.g., Does “Usefulness of stroke clinical practice guidelines and the predominant stroke clinical practice guideline used” correspond to survey questions 18 and 17?)

11. p. 17: insert a colon after “as one respondent commented”

12. p. 18: “carry out recommendations (81.7%) was the…” should be “were the”

13. p. 27: omit “(n=80)” as it does not belong in the Discussion section.

14. p. 54: The use of the label: “Members of a multidisciplinary team (n=245) who were a member of a dedicated Stroke Unit team” is unclear. Instead, the authors could state: “Not members of a multidisciplinary team (e.g., N=9), Members of a multidisciplinary team who were part of a dedicated Stroke Unit team (e.g., N=99),” and “Members of a multidisciplinary team who were not part of a dedicated Stroke Unit team (e.g., N=146). “

15. p. 54: Delete “Combined” in “Combined years working with neurogenic communication disorders”

16. p. 55: “it’s clarity of information” should be “its clarity”

17. Throughout the manuscript need to ensure the use of a comma before “and” in a series of three or more items is consistent with the requirements of the journal: (e.g., p. 4: “need to regularly search, appraise and integrate this…”; p. 8: “physicians, occupational therapists, and physiotherapists”).

Discretionary Revisions
1. Also recommend the authors change the title to fit more with the aims of the study (e.g., “Experiences with stroke clinical practice guidelines and factors perceived to influence their use: a survey of speech pathologists.”)

2. Recommend ensure consistent wording when referring to the results throughout the paper (e.g., p. 2: “Work setting” in the abstract should be “Work environment” to be congruent with what is in the Results on p. 18 and on p. 20).

3. p. 7: Suggest reword the awkward sentence beginning: “One systematic review of the literature…”

4. p. 10: Suggest reword: “This resulted in a …” to “This process resulted in a…”

5. The article could be shortened considerably, particularly the Results section.

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.