Author's response to reviews

Title: Implementing a service charter for an integrated regional stroke service: an exploratory case study

Authors:

Jean-Pierre Thomassen (thomassen@tno.nl)
Kees Ahaus (c.t.b.ahaus@rug.nl)
Steven Van de Walle (vandewalle@fsw.eur.nl)

Version: 5 Date: 22 December 2013

Author's response to reviews: see over
To:
Flory Mae Calumpita
Journal Editorial Office
BioMed Central

Rotterdam, december 8. 2013

Thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to improve our manuscript. You hereby receive
the new version of the article, a point-by-point response to the concerns and a figure used in the
article.

Jean-Pierre Thomassen
Kees Ahaus
Steven Van de Walle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Robbert Huijsman</th>
<th>What did we do with it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The use of the word &quot;implementation&quot; (put something into use), is confusing as it is also used for the development phase (authors call that the first phase).</td>
<td>In the text we have separated the development and implementation of a service charter. Development is no longer a part of the implementation. In the title and in the whole article 'development' and 'implementation' are now two different phases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Readers may think that the authors did this development and implementation work themselves (through the wording of the sections Background and Setting), but the authors have only interviewed 12 persons after the whole thing, or not?</td>
<td>The reviewer is right. We were not involved in the development and implementation of the service charter. We have mentioned this explicitly in the method section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The five organizations in the stroke service only seem to include two out of the three phases of stroke care, as the third chronic long term care phase is not included (please be clear about this, also in the Discussion).</td>
<td>We have added this in the first paragraph of the settings section. Here we have mentioned that our research only involves phase 1 and 2 organizations. Also in the discussion we have mentioned this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Many references are mentioned more than once, but with new reference numbers in the list. Use cross-reference.</td>
<td>Cross references have been used in the list in order to shorten it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Discussion is quite &quot;wordy&quot; (also perhaps other sections like Methods), but on the other hand some essentials have not been discussed (missing third phase; will these efforts really materialize the two goals mentioned on page 5, i.e. patient-centredness and patient satisfaction; including patients in developing a charter?).</td>
<td>We have shortened the discussion section. In the last section of the discussion we have mentioned that follow up research could investigate on the actual effects of the service charter on patient-centeredness and patient satisfaction. This is a very interesting subject, however it was not the goal of our research. Therefore we can't give results on this. We have now reflected on this issue in the discussion. We have also mentioned the missing third phase in the discussion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kris Vanhaecht
**Revision 1)** in the methods it could be helpful to include a second figure in which you present the care-chain and provide some information on the involved organizations and the persons you interviewed.

We have chosen not to insert a figure, but to describe the structure briefly. In the first lines of the setting-section we have now described the three phases of the integrated regional stroke service, in order to clarify the structure of the care chain for readers.

If it is your opinion that the revised section still does not make the composition and structure of the care chain sufficiently clear, we can of course still include a figure.

In the second paragraph of the methods section, a brief summary of the profile of the respondents was already included. We have now extended this description.

---

**Revision 2)** in the discussion I would suggest to add a paragraph about the limitation that you present a study on service charters in the field of patient centered care without including patients but focus on healthcare professionals. I would like to read about your idea how to include patients and family members in this type of research.

In the setting section we have described how the organizations have actively involved patients in the development of the service charter (survey, focusgroups and individual interviews).

Since the goal of our research was to determine the organizational enablers, we have included experienced managers and employees. In our research we did not use the opinions of patients and their relatives on enablers. This can be considered as a limitation. Follow up research can study the expectations and preferences of this important group on the for the patient relevant aspects of the implementation. By using interviews or focusgroups preferences concerning e.g. how to communicate and use a service charter can be researched. Furthermore research can be conducted on the actual effectiveness of service charters. Do they really contribute in improving the patient-centeredness and increasing patient satisfaction? In a healthcare setting no research on this issue has been done till now.

---

| BMC | Please make the following formatting changes | We have revised the manuscript in |
during revision of your manuscript. Ensuring that the manuscript meets the journals manuscript structure will help to speed the production process if your manuscript is accepted for publication.

1. Please state in the manuscript the name of ethics committee that waived the need for ethical review or a reference or link to the legislation that states that ethical approval is not required for this research.

   In the Netherlands the relevant legislation is the *Wet medisch wetenschappelijk onderzoek met mensen* (Law on medical scientific research among people). See: [http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0009408/geldigheidsdatum_27-11-2013](http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0009408/geldigheidsdatum_27-11-2013)

   This law describes the criteria for submitting research to a medical-ethical committee:

   Since we have not involved patients or relatives, nor did we do retrospective research among patients, ethical approval is not required.

   We have added a text in the methods section.

2. Box

   Unfortunately we cannot incorporate boxes. Please either change the box to a table and update any references to within the text, or include the information within the manuscript text. You can use indentation to highlight the text.

   We assume this comment refers to table 1. We have changed the format.

Please also ensure that your revised manuscript conforms to the journal style ([http://www.biomedcentral.com/info/ifora/medicine_journals](http://www.biomedcentral.com/info/ifora/medicine_journals)). It is important that your files are correctly formatted.

We have revised the manuscript in conformance with your guidelines.