Reviewer's report

Title: Quality of physical therapy from a patient's perspective; factor analysis on web-based survey data revealed three dimensions in patient experiences with physical therapy

Version: 2  Date: 10 February 2014

Reviewer: Eduardo Cruz

Reviewer's report:

This is a consistent article about a very important patient-focused indicator relevant for patients, physical therapists, insurance companies and society in general. My suggestions are aiming to further improve a very interesting paper.

Background

The relevance and the reasons why the study was developed were clearly explained. However the contribution of this study could be limited to the quality of the physical therapy care in the Netherlands health care context.

Methods

Relevant domains for measurement were the result of a previous study, resulting in ten dimensions. The authors use a factor analysis approach to clarify the number of dimensions relevant to assess the quality of the physical therapy care. This method is appropriate to the research objective and the study recruited an adequate sample size.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

The inclusion of more detailed information concerning the methods section could improve the clarity of the study. For example, how were the patients invited? Were there standardized instructions? Was the survey filled at home or in the clinic? Was the physical therapist present? Did all the invited patients agree to participate? Were there missing items? If yes, how were they handled? Although some of the above issues are addressed in the study limitations it would be important to provide a clear glance of the study design to the reader.

In the discussion section the authors need to rephrase the second paragraph where they stated “The reduction of dimensions creates clarity for health care professionals, who can now see at a glance in what areas they can improve their services….”. Without a further study, it is not possible to know if the reduced length of the questionnaire increases variance thus helping the health care professionals find better information to improve the quality of their care. The authors, in page 12, recognize this, where they stated, “Further study has to examine whether the reduced length of the questionnaire increases variance and thus increases the quality of the data.”
Minor corrections:

• I cannot find what the abbreviations 'EMRs' stand for.
• In page 7, second paragraph “In the factor analysis of the rest of the unique items, 13 components were extracted (see Table 4).” I think the authors mean Table 5.

Discretionary Revisions

Although the authors provide the information needed to understand the decision they made concerning the factors identified, more detailed information about the principal component analysis would be helpful. For example, were there other criteria used to decide on the number of factors to retain? No information is given on how the number of factors emerged (e.g. eigenvalues exceeding a predetermined value; decision based on eigenvalue screeplot as well as the total variance explained by the different components).

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests