Reviewer’s report

Title: A qualitative analysis of information sharing for children with medical complexity within and across health care organizations

Version: 2 Date: 19 November 2013

Reviewer: Dennis Kuo

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Overall I enjoyed reading this paper and find that it has some very useful findings about implementing shared written care plans that I would like to see in print. The authors note up front that the qualitative analyses are, in large part, secondary analyses from other projects – notably building off reference #13 (Adams S et al) that discusses the usefulness of care plans. The authors have tried to structure the findings specifically around information sharing between parties to a care plan for CMC, as information sharing and information exchange are crucial to development and implementation of a care plan. This specific information is an important finding and I think the Discussion is well written about how to improve information sharing between multiple parties.

My concern about the paper is largely limited to the introduction, which I found a bit confusing on first read. I came away from it thinking this paper was about written care plans, which in fact is the focus of the Adams paper. This introduction mentions centralized records, information sharing between parties, and written care plans, and the references to each are all intertwined. In my mind (and I assume other readers) these are not synonymous. In my mind, centralized records means that records are housed in one location; information sharing means that data moves between one place and another; written care plan is a documented product of a coordinated care plan that is developed jointly by multiple parties. The implementation of the written care plan generally requires centralized records and information sharing.

The abstract makes no mention of written care plans, yet written care plan is prominently featured in the third paragraph (page 3) of the Background. The authors delve into a “comprehensive summative written care plan...has been proposed as one effective method of data consolidation.” I don’t agree with this sentence; the authors don’t provide a reference for it, either. I think it would be more accurate to say that a comprehensive written care plan is a product of coordinated care planning and implementation that requires extensive information sharing to be effectively utilized. This is, of course, a significant part of the framework in the Adams paper.

My comments:

1. Minor essential revision. I think the introduction would be clearer if the second paragraph was about written care plans – drawing on the Adams paper – stating
that the written care plan is a mechanism to achieve integrated and coordinated care. The third paragraph then emphasizes that developing and implementing a written care plan requires effective information sharing between all parties. Revising the introduction in that manner would set up the reader to understand the methods more clearly, since the study participants were really discussing care plans and information sharing just came up frequently enough to merit a secondary analysis.

2. Discretionary revision. Abstract, Background: I think the third sentence could read “The written care plan is an excellent test care for how well information sharing is currently occurring.”

3. Discretionary revision. Results: Generally I find it easier to read qualitative results findings by having quotes embedded in the text. I did find the quotes in the Table, but I think some snippets in the text would enhance readability.

4. Minor essential revision. Results, page 11, Lack of Comprehensive Communication Plan: it was not clear in the text what this was referring to. The Table’s quote is a little clearer at what the authors are referring to: effective information sharing requires a clear expectation about how and when information is transferred from one place to another. Some revision in the text for clarity is appreciated.

5. Discretionary revision. Discussion, page 15, first full paragraph: the second sentence “Studies reiterate the need for care…” is a very long sentence and needs to be shortened and/or divided into two sentences.

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest 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.