Reviewer's report

Title: Do large-scale systems interventions improve patient outcomes? A systematic review

Version: 5 Date: 14 May 2014

Reviewer: Naomi Fulop

Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions
The authors have made a good attempt to address both reviewers’ comments. The paper reads somewhat more clearly now in terms of its foci.

i) The focus on hospital- and system-wide interventions rather than interventions focused on a specific-issue even if multi-site is much clearer (could be made even clearer in the title by including hospital- and system-wide?)

ii) In their response, the authors say their focus is on whether these interventions improve patient outcomes rather than how, and yet they still refer to the ‘how’ question e.g. in background of abstract and in section in paper on factors influencing improvement. That’s fine as long as they are consistent in the paper about what the questions were that they were addressing. Can the authors address this in next revision?

iii) It also reads strangely that the authors have reported their findings on the factors influencing improvement before the findings on impact on outcomes – wouldn’t it be more logical the other way round given focus of paper is on whether interventions had an impact? Similarly with how findings are presented in Table 3.

iv) As both reviewers requested, the authors have broadened the discussion section with reference to other relevant papers. I’d still like to see references to support the statement ‘qualitative studies are needed to better answer these questions’. Think, perhaps, the authors meant to use ref no. 49 for this rather than for the literature on the impact of leadership. And would still like to see, as per my original review, some reference to fairly extensive literature on eg the role of contextual factors in quality/safety improvement and how findings here relate. see eg Kaplan et al Milbank Quarterly 2010.

- Minor Essential Revisions
Can authors be consistent re ‘systems-wide’ or ‘system-wide’.

- Discretionary Revisions

Please note that both the comments entered here and answers to the questions below constitute the report, bearing your name, that will be forwarded to the authors and published on the site if the article is accepted.
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.

Declaration of competing interests: None.