Reviewer's report

Title: The challenges in monitoring and preventing patient safety incidents for people with intellectual disabilities in NHS acute hospitals: evidence from a mixed-methods study

Version: 3  Date: 23 April 2014

Reviewer: Pauline Heslop

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Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The ‘background’ is much improved, with more clarity about what is understood by the term ‘patient safety’. However, the first sentence of the second paragraph might not make sense to the reader ‘…one in ten patients experience preventable harm or adverse events in hospital and that around 50% of these are preventable’. This sentence needs to be clarified, and the references (all of which are a decade or more old) should be updated.

2. The ‘Results’ section is somewhat improved, but remains confusing overall and still requires attention. The advice of one referee about distinguishing between different sorts of risks has not been followed, nor has the request by the other reviewer for clarification of why some issues have been included as being of relevance. It would be helpful to signpost the reader about how the authors will take them through the findings eg discuss general methodological issues related to incident reports, complaints and obtaining the views of staff first, before looking in more detail at the patient safety issues highlighted.

   a. The section about ‘staff perspectives’ requires some clarification and rewriting. At present it conflates methodological issues with findings, and it would be more helpful for these to be kept separate. In this section I would expect to only have a summary of findings related to obtaining the views of staff. This would lessen the confusing overlap that there currently is between this and the next section.

   b. The section about ‘patient safety issues’ also requires some reworking and expanding. The commentary in the text, and the issues identified in Table 5 should be consistent – for example I am unsure what the rationale is for commenting on ‘delayed treatment or non-treatment decisions related to consent issues’ in the text, whereas this does not feature as a heading in Table 5.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Results section: Staff perspectives. Table 4 refers to clinical staff questionnaires. The sub-heading and Table should use the same term ie either ‘staff’ or ‘clinical staff’

Level of interest: An article of importance 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