Reviewer’s report

Title: Adapting developing country methodology to improve the quality of health needs assessments

Version: 1 Date: 12 December 2004

Reviewer: David Peters

Reviewer’s report:

General

This is a well written piece telling a nice story about how a survey tool was adapted and used for assessing health needs in 3 areas of Dublin.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

The authors ought to be more explicit about the study questions, the variables assessed, and show us results of the surveys. Aside from telling us who sponsored the research and that they broadly intended to assess health needs, we know little else about what questions were asked.

The authors also don’t show us any of the results of the three surveys. The reader thus cannot tell whether the results are robust, which presumably is one of the main reasons for writing the paper.

Another main reason for writing the paper was to demonstrate how the results have been used, which they’d like us to believe is a result of community participation and interest by local healthcare providers and advocates. This could well be. But the description of community participation tells us about using them as data collectors, and then having public dissemination of the results. This by itself would be a fairly low level of community participation, which may be selling the authors short. Can the authors describe who was involved in defining the questions to be studied? Is there any measure of the number and type of participants involved in the various stages of consultation?

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.