Reviewer's report

Title: Towards an integration of general practitioner posts and accident and emergency departments: a case study of two integrated emergency posts in the Netherlands

Version: 1 Date: 7 July 2008

Reviewer: Gerard Bury

Reviewer's report:

General comments

1. There are english language issues, particularly with tenses, which should be addressed.

2. This is an important report on a significant initiative in an area of healthcare which is challenging for society, the professions and those who fund care. The initiative deserves careful analysis and reporting and this paper may go some way to identifying its impact. However, there are real limitations on this study.

3. The research questions posed are valid and important: however, the methods chosen to address them are not ones to provide definitive answers. An RCT study would be required to answer the initial key questions - the limitations of the current case-control methodology are not sufficiently stated. Satisfaction surveys (particularly with low uptake) are not definitive; also, no clinical data on process or outcome of care are included.

The following specific questions arise:

Out-of-hours only at both times?
How were respondents for satisfaction surveys selected?
Numbers of patients or patient contacts?
Roughly how many docs at each site?
How were interviewees selected?
Can the dramatic changes in visiting rates be explained only by the organisational changes?
What influence does the change in number of registered patients have?
Can the dramatic changes in self-referrals and durations be explained only by the organisational changes?
Any info on clinical content?
What grades of the MTS were eligible for distribution to either GPs or A&EDs?
What were the reasons for the concerns re triage?
Preparation/support for introduction of IEP?
Examples of roles/limits for the IEPs?

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'