Reviewer’s report

Title: Effective In-Service Training Design and Delivery: Evidence from an Integrative Review of the Literature

Version: 1 Date: 29 October 2012

Reviewer: Hugh Barr

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Bluestone et al. Effective In-service Training ----

This is a well crafted review of in-service training for health professionals based on tree sources - systematic reviews, RCTs and ‘project evaluations’. Findings tend to be confirmatory of conventional wisdom but none the worse for that. Most are based on only a few of the one-off evaluations (which the authors might have acknowledged as a limitation) and relying heavily on those from systemic reviews. That prompts me to request more information about the criteria by which they were selected and evaluated for inclusion. Did those included stick to RCTs and ‘project evaluations’ or stray into other methodologies? The term ‘project evaluation’ lacks definition and gets mislaid after the initial mention.

I was sorry to see observational and qualitative studies excluded when these are often the most illuminative regarding the learning about process. Quantitative studies more often relate to outcomes. Viewed thus, qualitative and quantitative are complementary to relate process to outcomes.

Retention of the big table summarising the studies is essential to enable the reader to test the author’s finding against his/her reading and to draw his/her own inferences.

Subject to clarification as above the paper merits publication. It makes its methodology clear and lends itself readily to replication.

I confirm my readiness for the above to be published

Hugh Barr

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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 have no competing interests.
Hugh Barr