Reviewer's report

Title: Conducting Appropriate Evaluations of Continuing Medical Education in Post-Conflict areas Is Essential to Assure Effectiveness-Qualitative Assessment in Nagorno Karabagh-A Qualitative Study

Version: 1  Date: 10 April 2014

Reviewer: Sarah Kagan

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. In my reading of the manuscript, I offer the following comments for consideration by the authors in improving the quality of the manuscript – these are major compulsory revisions.

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined? Yes, the research focus is well defined. However, the overarching research question is not found and requires a clearly articulated statement of purpose. Moreover, the specific aims of the project are included in the methods section when they should be part of the introduction.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work? While the methods are in general appropriate, the authors confused qualitative data collection methods (e.g. individual interviews and focus groups) with actual qualitative methods. The methodology employed must be stated and well described in its application within the project being reported. I surmise that this may be a qualitative content analysis – a descriptive qualitative method – that is appropriate to the research question. However, I do not see any description of the method. In addition, the methods are not conveyed in the most easily understood manner. Often ideas that belong to one domain are inserted into discussion of another. For example, the issues of design and approach like triangulated data sources are mentioned after recruitment. Saturation is mentioned incorrectly as a outcome of the analysis. The analytic techniques used are not described and saturation on what categories is not defined. I encourage the authors to omit saturation as this is a measure of rigor generally related to interpretive and not to descriptive qualitative studies. Discussion of data management and particularly translation in relation to analysis as well as maintenance of rigor are missing from the methods section.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled? The data appear well collected and sound. However, the findings are somewhat difficult to judge at this point given that data management and the analytic process are not detailed.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? The manuscript follows accepted practices for research reporting in the qualitative tradition. However, there are missing elements in the methods and in the discussion which mandate revision of those sections.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported
by the data? In general, the discussion is acceptable. However, the discussion
lacks an appreciation of the boundaries or limitations of the project and its
findings.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? I find the
title generally apt but overly long and overtly redundant. I encourage the authors
to revise it.

7. Is the writing acceptable? Overall, the writing is acceptable though readability
and quality are lessened by many “run-on” sentences and incomplete
paragraphs. I encourage the authors to copy edit the entire manuscript for
syntax, paragraph construction, and completeness (with regard to necessary
description in research reporting).

Again, my thanks for asking me to review this manuscript. I hope that the authors
find my comments helpful in revision. All of my suggested revisions are major
compulsory revisions.

**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:**

As I noted in the comments to the Editor, I must disclose that I do know the
authors personally as colleagues and former students at the American University
of Armenia and was aware that the study was being conducted. However, I have
not read any form of the research report or any version of this manuscript prior to
review.