Author's response to reviews

Title: Progress on Quality Management in the German Health System - a Long and Winding Road

Authors:

Juergen Breckenkamp (juegen.breckenkamp@uni-bielefeld.de)
Christiane Wiskow (wiskow@salumondi.org)
Ulrich Laaser (ulrich.laaser@uni-bielefeld.de)

Version: 2 Date: 24 November 2005

Author's response to reviews:

Dear HARPS Editorial Team,

here our comments to the reviewers:

1) The title has been changed regarding recommendation to stress the review character of the manuscript
2) The paper has been edited.
3) Quality assurance und quality management:
The term quality assurance has been removed whenever possible. Quality assurance" is used in that passages of the text directly focussing on methods (measurement) of quality management. Regarding quality assurance and quality management there is no consequent use by different German institutions. It is assumed, that both terms are used as synonymical terms by different parties.
For example the Federal Office for Quality Assurance (BQS, Bundesgeschäftsstelle Qualitätssicherung) as well as the Federal Medical Chamber (BAEK, Bundesarztekammer) and the Joint Federal Committee (G-BA, Gemeinsamer Bundesausschuss) use the term "quality assurance".
In corresponding laws it is differentiated between quality assurance (rather focussing on external aspects) and quality management (rather focussing on internal aspects).
Recapitulating the use of quality assurance and quality management seems to be different by the mentioned institutes compared with international use or in other words quality assurance and quality management are used as concepts which somehow evade precise definitions.
4) The conclusions have been revised to met the findings and the discussion.

Yours sincerely
Juergen Breckenkamp