Reviewer's report

Title: Audit and Feedback and Clinical Practice Guideline Adherence: Making Feedback Actionable

Version: Date: 31 March 2006

Reviewer: Brad Doebbeling

Reviewer's report:

General

This is an important qualitative study of what factors influence effective guideline implementation. It adds to our understanding of the dimensions of effective and timely feedback. The concepts of timeliness, individualization, non-punitiveness, and customizability are key to targeting feedback to be actionable and have impact. We suspect it will be of wide interest.

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

Define HPF and PPF in the abstract.

Add word "employees at" or "providers and managers at" to description of sample of 6 VAMCs

Clarify sentence in Methods section of abstract--is it "to practice guideline implementation" or to better understand practices involved in guideline implementation, or?

Results section--high performing facilities or high performing individuals?

Suggest splitting the conclusion into 2 sentences.

Please add a conclusion for managers and policy makers about what they should do in response to these findings. Such as "Managers and policy makers need to ensure that their feedback of performance is actionable..."

Capitalize first word after RESULTS and CONCLUSION in the abstract.

Replace & with 'and' on p. 4.

Methods data analysis (p.7 ) refers to transcripts but data collection section refers to note taking. Were tape recorders used and interviews transcribed?

Were more than 1 coder involved in coding the same sections to reach agreement on the coding structure?

The discussion could benefit from a discussion of how this papers findings add to or build upon relevant literature. [Discretionary--For example, these findings are consistent with a paper on

Suggest adding a paragraph on policy and management implications of the study.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Use 'valence' in place of 'sign' at bottom of p. 3 I was somewhat curious about the 'difference' in performance measures between the HPF and LPF included in the study.

Would it be helpful to add they type of employees and more about the sample...in other words were the CPGs ambulatory care prevention, chronic care, inpatient?

Consider adding a discussion of issues related to provider-level feedback (limited sample size, reliability problems, validity questions) versus work-group or clinic (may be more relevant to emphasis on improving the system, etc)

The introduction could also refer to the pay for performance movement as a major stimulus for audit and feedback

There are research needs to improve methodologic standards, better understand how feedback is given influences organizational change, speed, sustainability.

Site selection (page 4) consider citation to original report describing methods.

Suggest adding a section on strengths of the study (for example Horton recommends Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Study question
Study design
Data collection
Analysis
Interpretation).

Suggest adding more on "Interpretation and Implications in the Context of the Totality of Evidence

Is there a systematic review to refer to?
If not, could one be reasonably done here and now?
What this study adds to the available evidence
Effects on patient care and health policy
Possible mechanisms"

For example, what does this add to the recent Grimshaw review and what issues need further investigation

Consider potentially adding section on "Controversies Raised by This Study" using Horton's recommendations on a structured discussion.

Suggest expanding the next steps in terms of research.
What next?: Accept after minor essential 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.