Reviewer's report

Title: EQUIP: Implementing chronic care principles and applying formative evaluation methods to improve care for schizophrenia

Version: 1 Date: 8 November 2006

Reviewer: Roger Paxton

Reviewer's report:

General
This paper is informative and useful but hard to follow and assimilate owing to poor organisation in places and wording which is sometimes unclear. The actual structure of the paper is: 1. Background (development of QUERI) 2. Report on EQIP (methods, results and implications) 3. Description of EQUIP-2 (summary of work in progress and evaluation plans). This structure should be clear in the abstract and the headings throughout the paper.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
p2. The methods section in the abstract should describe the methods used in the paper as well as the methods contained in the interventions described in the paper. The paper reports the background, development, results and implications of EQUIP, and goes on to describe work in progress on EQIP-2. This should be clear at the start.
p2. The results section should be clear that EQUIP-2 is in progress and not completed: initial findings are being used to develop a more comprehensive approach, rather than were used to develop....
p2. The conclusions are not justified by the results presented. The last sentence should begin: There is preliminary evidence that QUERI tools are useful...
p4. The tables should be clearly introduced and commented on in the text.
p5. Where does the background end and the methods start? The section on EQUIP seems to be the start of the main substance of the work reported, and so the methods section should begin here.
P5. Again the tables need to be introduced in the text.
P5. EQUIP is introduced as an RCT but without mention of participants, participant numbers, settings, power calculation etc. Some but not all of this information is in table 3, but it should all be provided and summarised in the text.
p5. The aims of EQUIP are first described as to investigate the effects of a particular care model by means of an RCT. Later on the same page we are told that EQIP was less about that and more about evaluating whether the model could be applied to schizophrenia. What were the aims?
p5. The results are not clearly presented, and this is particularly difficult and surprising as they form the basis for EQUIP-2, which the paper goes on to discuss.
Have the results of EQUIP been published elsewhere? The references do not suggest so.
p6. This page moves from the description of methods and tables of results on the previous page to a discussion of results and implications, with no heading signalling the changes. These sections should be separated and clear.
p8. Here the results of EQUIP are belatedly presented in table 7 together with the lessons drawn from them. This is a disjointed presentation of results and again the tables are not introduced or summarised.
p11 and 12. The discussion is clear, well ordered and concise.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the 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.