Reviewer's report

Title: Clinicians' evaluations of, endorsements of, and intentions to use practice guidelines change over time: a retrospective analysis from an organized guideline program

Version: 2 Date: 16 September 2008

Reviewer: Jo Rycroft-Malone

Reviewer's report:

Major revisions

Given the considerable investment in the development of clinical practice guidelines, research that attempts to explore how these might be used in practice is welcome. I offer some suggestions as to how I think the paper might be strengthened.

- The context to the study is brief, and whilst this is not necessarily an issue I think it would be helpful to the reader to expand on some points in order to better contextualise the study. In particular, the idea that: intentions to use CPGs, in relation to perceptions versus ‘actual objective differences' needs more explanation and reference to previous research/literature. The concepts of context, product and process that you introduce also need further explanation and again reference to other literature.

- Whilst you make the point that collectively, product, process and context is ‘less understood' it is not clear how the study objectives, as they are currently stated, are collectively addressing this issue – particularly how context is being studied. It is not clear throughout the outcomes, findings and discussion sections how/if context was studied/explored.

- In terms of clarity of process I was wondering whether there may be more detail that you could provide about the modelling processes used in analysis and how you dealt with the various data?

- The discussion lacked some depth and in places felt a little like a re-iteration of the findings. To avoid the ‘so what' factor, considering the findings in the context of the guideline implementation literature more broadly would enhance the discussion. I was also wondering about some of the gender issues that emerged in the analysis – not something that is particularly obvious in the published literature to date, and something that could provide ‘food for thought' in future research. Providing some clear statements about what the research has contributed and drawing out clearer implications would also be helpful; particularly exploring the use of existing data sets and the idea of doing this over time.

- The inclusion of a limitations section, which includes a consideration of the transferability of the findings to other groups and settings (etc) would enhance the balance of the paper.
Minor revisions

- It becomes clear when you describe the sample later in the paper who you mean by ‘clinicians’, but it would be useful to have this upfront (i.e. ?mainly medical practitioners) – the term means different things in different countries.
- Given the interest in finding out about links between characteristics and intentions to use I was wondering whether the study was guided or underpinned by any particular theory/ies?
- Given the diversity of the findings, and because you are sharing size of effects and strength of factors/issues, what the key findings are isn’t always obvious on first reading. Inserting some summary statements might help this.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have not competing interests