Reviewer's report

Title: Instrument development, data collection and characteristics of practices, staff and measures in the Improving Quality of Care in Diabetes (iQuaD) Study

Version: 1 Date: 9 May 2011

Reviewer: Atle Fretheim

Reviewer's report:

This is a first report from a larger study where the aim is to explore factors that influence the quality of the clinical management of patients with diabetes - with an ultimate goal of using the research findings to design interventions strategies that will improve the health in this patient group.

The current report is of limited interest on its own, but will serve as important background information for future publications that are expected from this project - in my mind. The manuscript is long, but well-written. It is very detailed and comprehensive, but this contributes to transparency for the research project as a whole. It will likely be read only by other researchers working in this developing research area, but may be of significant use to them. The authors' explicit invitation to other researchers to collaborate and get access to their data is plausible.

I have no major or minor compulsory revisions, only a few discretionary.

In summary:
- The question posed by the authors seems new and well defined.
- The methods were appropriate and well described insufficient detail.
- The seem data sound.
- The discussion and conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported by the data.
- The title and abstract accurately conveys what has been found.
- The writing acceptable.

Discretionary revisions:
The Background section focusses almos solely on the need for developing a theoretical basis for implementation-research in this area, but as far as I can see the larger project is about more than that. I was a bit puzzled by this and perhaps you could start your background-section a bit "wider", before "narrowing down" and addressing the need for more use of theory and how the study may contribute to that - if you agree that you are actually exploring other determinants than those that are theory-based (at least regarding the organisation issues I think you are looking at other attributes than those that deal with various cognitions).
P. 6. In bullet point 2 for data collected at 12 months, you may want to point out that the data was extracted from the medical records - for clarification (since I assumed, but was not sure, this was the case when I read it the first time!)

P. 8 You want to, already here, explain the reader who the telephone interview was conducted with.

P. 15. The QOF-data was a bit confusing to me. It was not mentioned earlier, and it is not clear in the text where the data comes from (before it is entered into the QOF-database). Is it based on electronic medical records, patient feedback, or what?

P. 17. "half day session" is a concept I do not know or understand, so it would be good to provide a brief explanation.

P. 19. TPB and SCT-abbreviations are only used once, so you might as well spell it out here too.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I know some of the authors, but not that well. I maintain more or less regular contact with only one of them (Jeremy Grimshaw), and I do not feel that this has influenced my assessment of the manuscript. Other than that:
I declare that I have no competing interests.