Reviewer's report

Title: Guideline adaptation and implementation: a natural experiment

Version: 1 Date: 19 October 2012

Reviewer: Tari Turner

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this article exploring the process of guideline adaptation in 5 cancer projects in Canada. Guideline adaptation is an important aspect of implementation science in which there has been little reported research. The manuscript is a useful description of the realities of the process of adaptation and of the needs of groups adapting guidelines. It also provides a useful commentary on ADAPTE, the most widely promoted method for adapting guidelines.

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
   Yes

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
   Yes – for an exploratory study. More detail of the methods used to analyse the data would be helpful.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
   Yes – to the extent that it is relevant/feasible in an exploratory/descriptive study.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Not applicable

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   Yes.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes – with the exception that I am not sure that this is a natural experiment as there are no comparisons being drawn; it's a collection of case studies or an observational study.

7. Is the writing acceptable?
   Yes

Discretionary revisions

1. I don’t think that “a natural experiment” is the most accurate description of this study and I’d remove it from the title.
2. The occasional use of italic text is distracting, I suggest it be removed throughout except where it is used in quotes.

3. “Unlike most dedicated guideline enterprises, these groups were 100% volunteers working over and above their full-time clinical and/or administrative responsibilities” I suggest this is common for many guideline development (and particularly adaptation) projects

4. It is not immediately clear how the section in the Background titled “Conceptualization in Activating Health Care Knowledge” links to the rest of the work. It could be removed.

**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 declare that I have no competing interests