Reviewer’s report

Title: A Randomized Trial of Practice Facilitation to Improve the Delivery of Chronic Illness Care in Primary Care: Initial and Sustained Effects

Version: 1 Date: 1 June 2013

Reviewer: Tobias Freund

Reviewer’s report:

Parchman et al. report on a randomized Trial of Practice Facilitation to Improve the Delivery of Chronic Illness Care in Primary Care. Practice facilitation is an upcoming "trend" for implementation of organizational change and guidelines. Therefore, the submission is a valuable contribution to the field of implementation science. The study is methodologically sound and the manuscript is well-written overall. However I suggest some revisions which may further increase the quality of the manuscript:

Major points:

1) In your discussion, you mention the questionable (clinical) relevance of your statistically significant finding that ACIC scores increased by 0.75 points. Instead of arguing with the relation between ACIC scores and HbA1c levels (as an increase of 0.144% in itself remains of questionable clinical relevance) I suggest to display the numbers and percentages of practices with "limited", "basic", "good" and "fully developed" support at T0, T1 and T2. This may inform readers about the effect of your interventions at the "margins" of the ACIC distribution across practices. I am aware of the fact that the differences in categorical distributions of practices at the three timepoints may not be statistically significant but they are nevertheless of high interest for the informed reader.

2) As you are right with your statement that clinical relevance of your main finding is questionable, please state this fact also in the abstract and conclusion part of your manuscript.

3) Due to the fact that allocation was not concealed at time of consent of participating practice your study is at risk of selection bias. Therefore, it would be helpful to see the number of practices invited / declined (and participated) separately for both groups. Furthermore, I suggest to discuss this limitation as one explanation for the relatively small effect that you achieved in "motivated" practices.

Minor point:
1) page 10 sent 1: Please add the range to SD 1.5 (as you did before)

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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

Declaration of competing interests: No conflict of interest.