Reviewer’s report

Title:'Just another incentive scheme.' A qualitative interview study of a local pay-for-performance scheme for primary care

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Reviewer:Aloysius Niroshan Siriwardena

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for asking me to review this paper. The authors sought to investigate ‘primary care professionals’ experience of the local QOF scheme’ in one PCT which attempted to reduce health inequalities in a number of clinical domains.

The research methods are well described and appropriate and the data are clearly presented. The main themes reflect the data that are presented. The detailed coding framework could be presented as an online appendix to help readers determine how these were arrived at.

The discussion covers the limitations of the study and relates the study findings to the broader literature on financial incentives. However, the QOF and local adaptations of it form a multicomponent complex intervention, of which financial incentives are only one component, as the authors rightly state. A systematic review of the QOF has been published.[1]

There is an implication that local indicators would lead to greater local ownership but this depends on how the indicators were developed. The authors should explain how these indicators were developed and discuss how indicators might be developed to increase participating practices’ sense of ownership.

There is a suggestion that all local schemes are designed to reduce inequalities (P19, lines 417-420) but it seems unlikely that this applies to all local schemes.

The authors also argue the need for ‘future local schemes…to recognise the greater difficulties faced by practices serving more deprived populations and offer them higher rates of reward’. This is at odds with quotes from staff working on such practices and seems at odds with the findings from this paper. It would be helpful to understand why practices in more deprived areas had lower performance before suggesting that rewards need to be increased for these practice to improve performance.

References


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.