Reviewer's report

Title: GPs' experiences of working with sick leave after changes in the Swedish social security system, a qualitative focus group study

Version: 3 Date: 13 October 2014

Reviewer: Wout de Boer

Reviewer's report:

The revised manuscript does not convince me that this work is worth publishing. My main criticism is that the study was carried out in an unclear and probably unreliable way. I find that the authors are way too optimistic and uncritical to their results. To the extent that the study may have been carried out well I find the results not very interesting to the audience.

The sampling is unclear to me. How did the authors define the practices they wanted to include? Did all invited participate? How do they substantiate the claim that the ultimate set of respondents represents a maximum variation? Did the 22 respondents include the authors?

Next, it is unclear to me how reliable the procedure was to determine meaningful units. One author did this and the examples given do not illustrate that this is the only the selection could have been done. The authors found a lack of predetermined theory: did they search for such a theory? How? And how was determined which areas were important to cover? Table 2 is not more convincing to me than it was in the first draft. And why would the reader accept that the identification and aggregation of meaningful units were carried out reliably? The way in which judged that saturation was achieved is still unclear or, if the present description is all there is, unconvincing.

It is against this back ground an overstatement that four categories “emerged”. They did not emerge, I would think, they were defined by the authors and the reader cannot appreciate this decision. Moreover, the categories 1 and 3 seem to overlap easily. I’m not sure these are the most relevant and distinguishing categories. The authors find their material reach; I do not see that.

In the results the authors use semi-quantitative statements that are not readily understandable either: see rules 154/ 160/ 165/ 170/ 174/ 183/ 239-240.

Throughout the paper the authors are ambiguous about the value of a pre-post comparison. Reviewer Harris seems also to have read the paper as a pre-post comparison.

Furthermore the authors are unsystematic in their referral to the subject of their study: certification of sickness absence. Several different and sometimes inadequate terms are used throughout the paper.

Not being a native speaker I found many sentences of debatable quality of
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