Reviewer’s report

Title: The relationship between health literacy and patient activation among frequent users of healthcare services: a cross-sectional study.

Version: 1 Date: 17 Oct 2017

Reviewer: Christy Ledford

Reviewer's report:
Thank you for your careful attention to reviewer comments. The manuscript is stronger for the effort.

When you added the text that accompanies the new references numbered 23-28, it contradicted citation 22 from 1998. Incorporate those new citations more clearly. As it appears now, no information is synthesized other than that the two variables have been linked. Your paper needs to extend these findings and establish how your study builds upon this previous research. The discussion section does a better job of integrating this information -- it needs to be in the introduction to provide context to the method.

When defining patient activation, be clear that you are adopting Hibbard's definition and adapting it. Consider contrasting activation to empowerment or engagement, which are different. This will clarify what your purpose is.

In the methods, the new sentence that patient activation was an outcome -- does that meet it was an intervention target, that the intervention's purpose was to increase activation?

Is the French language PAM13 previously validated -- cite that.

Table 2 is unnecessary. Present statistical result in text only.
The previous studies that showed age as a moderator indicates that the correlation method presented here may not be rigorous enough to demonstrate how best to target interventions. Since you are over-powered in sample, do you have power to perform sub-group analyses by age cohorts? Or power to use a regression? Should interventionists be using age as a guide?

This statement, "This is the first study examining the association between health literacy and patient activation among frequent users of healthcare services with chronic diseases, seen in primary care." is still an overreach.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.
Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.
Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.
No

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.
I am able to assess the statistics

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:
Needs some language corrections before being published

**Declaration of competing interests**
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?
2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

'I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal