Reviewer's report

Title: Rural definition of health: A literature review

Version: 2 Date: 27 January 2015

Reviewer: Amanda Kenny

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review your manuscript that presents a 'systematic' literature review on a rural definition of health. Overall, it was well written and an enjoyable read.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The rationale for the study is that 'some rural populations appear to approach health differently'. The meaning of this is slightly unclear. It would be helpful to provide some examples of the ways in which this occurs. Whilst some descriptions are given of studies that report the views of rural people it is not clear how these vary from their urban counterparts.

2. Patient centred care is described as a very new concept. I am not sure that this is correct as the literature on patient centred care is well established.

3. Some clarity is needed around the method used in the study and exactly what type of review was conducted. The review does not appear to be a systematic review as all types of studies seem to have been included and there is limited discussion of quality. It appears to fit better with a scoping review or critical review – a paper by Grant and Booth that describes typologies of reviews is a good guide to different review approaches.

4. The description of how the review searches were conducted could be strengthened. Whilst some search terms were provided, were these used in any particular way? It is unclear whether all of the terms were used in a single string or whether Boolean logic was utilised.

5. In the methods section it would be better to describe how many articles were retrieved, how many were excluded and why.

Minor Essential Revisions

6. The legends in figure one should be clearer eg. Articles identified from reviews – was this from a review of reference lists?

Discretionary Revisions

7. Personally, I would avoid the use of the abbreviation RDOH as it interrupted the flow of the text. I would state the term in full at all usages, as it is central to your review question.

8. Some attention should be given to the length of sentences to improve the readability example page 4 line 72.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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