Reviewer's report

Title: Measuring progress with clinical governance development in New Zealand: perceptions of senior doctors in 2010 and 2012

Version: 3 Date: 1 September 2014

Reviewer: Marie Bismark

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper, which builds on an earlier study published in BMJ Quality and Safety. The introductory comments on clinical governance were among the clearest articulation of the concept that I have seen anywhere.

Discretionary revisions:

1. The low response rate is disappointing, though not unique to this study. Am I right in thinking that with 32% of senior medical officers responding and 65% providing complete data that the number of useable survey responses was around 20%? If so, I wonder whether that should be more clearly stated in the limitations section?

2. Switching between points ("8 point increase in the mean score") and percentages ("with the top scoring DHB achieving only 64%") is somewhat confusing. Greater consistency in the language used may assist readers.

3. I found the discussion of other clinical governance assessment tools to be a little light. There has been a profusion of new self-assessment tools in Australia over recent years, and I would be interest in the authors comments on the merits of their tool compared with others. e.g. http://www.safetyandquality.health.wa.gov.au/initiatives/clinical_governance.cfm

4. In my view, the paper would benefit from a final edit to pick up minor errors ("to to" in the abstract) and to improve the clarity of a few unwieldy sentences ("The item that improvement on was not statistically significant, probing participation in organisational design processes, indicates that this is an area that the DHBs perhaps need to focus more upon." "The reasons for New Zealand's middling performance may also be due to health professionals, particularly senior doctors, having enough time in their already busy schedules to dedicate to clinical governance and leadership activities or even take an interest in the 'higher calling' of leadership, especially if they have received limited training in the field and, thus, may see this as a non-core duty."

I look forward to seeing further papers from this study comparing the views of doctors with other health professionals.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely
related research interests

**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.