Reviewer’s report

Title: Informing the design of a national screening and treatment programme for chronic viral hepatitis in primary care: Qualitative study of at-risk immigrant communities and healthcare professionals

Version: 1 Date: 21 September 2014

Reviewer: Alicia Vedio

Reviewer’s report:

Review response:

I personally welcome the authors’ contribution to this relevant topic; having performed a systematic search of the literature I can confirm this is the first study in the UK to assess in depth knowledge and attitudes towards chronic hepatitis B in migrant communities and practitioners. It is also very valuable in the area of hepatitis C.

The study builds an information base to inform a future intervention called HepFree, funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), aiming to pilot testing and treatment of viral hepatitis in primary care.

Qualitative methodology has been used to gain in depth knowledge of factors that could inform the design of the intervention programme.

Abstract:

The abstract is informative and gives a clear summary of the paper. I suggest the following changes:

Discretionary revision
Please add analysis procedure in methods section.

Major compulsory revision
Conclusion: Please explain in brief “how” your output informs the intervention model, for example mentioning that a collaborative work including language and treatment support has been raised by the study as well as consideration of service capacity and efficacy/confidence.

1. Research question:

The question expressed by the authors is clear:

“This study aimed to build an understanding of the knowledge, beliefs and attitudes towards these conditions and their management in a range of high-risk minority ethnic communities and health professionals, in order to inform the design of a screening and treatment programme in primary care.”

2. Methods:
There are well described and appropriate methods used such as focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews.

Phase 2 - Focus groups:

Discretionary revisions:

- It may be useful to know how many focus groups you have held for each community (this could be added in table 2), and the average number of people in focus groups. You mention gender specific groups, could you provide a reason for it and detail if, and how, you think this influenced the output of the discussions.

- It would be also desirable to explain if you chose to recruit from more isolated or vulnerable groups, or if not, why? And any difficulties you had with recruitment.

- It would be important to mention the age spread as a limitation in terms of older or younger people representation.

Phase 3 - General practitioner interviews:

Discretionary revision

Please provide brief information of the ethnic composition and characteristic of GP practices (of the interviewees), you mention some are involved in Asylum Seekers Health but do not specify how many and whether they are located in London or Bradford.

3. Data:

The data provide good examples of information regarding factors that may inform the proposed intervention. The data are varied and a number of groups are analysed together, would your research have shown particular needs of the different cultures that may require careful thought?

4. I believe the manuscript adheres to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The discussion and conclusion acknowledge the findings adequately and acknowledge the factors that can influence the design and implementation of the proposed intervention.

6. Limitations

Discretionary revision

Although authors state limitations; these are not fully acknowledged as limitations; this may originate in their familiarity with quantitative research where limitation may reduce the value of a study.

I encourage the authors to rephrase limitations addressing how they could be improved and how have they influenced the data, as this is an important part of a qualitative paper assessment of quality and methodological rigour.
7. Acknowledgment of previous work:
The acknowledgement of work upon which the authors are building is appropriate and I cannot see any evidence of plagiarism.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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 no conflict of interest with the manuscript or the authors involved.