Reviewer's report

Title: Consenting for contact? Linking electronic health records to a research register within psychosis services, a mixed methods study.

Version: 2 Date: 27 December 2014

Reviewer: Rose McCabe

Reviewer's report:

This is an important and laudable piece of research. However, there are some concerns in how it is currently reported, which may be related to the challenges of this multi-phase multi-method study. The paper could be considerably improved by reporting the study more comprehensively, in particular the data analysis and the findings. As a reader, I am left wondering about all of the interesting things the clinicians and service users said in the focus groups and discussed together in the consultations!

Major Compulsory Revisions:

Was inter-rater reliability conducted on the themes coded in the focus groups?

In the data analysis section, the authors state: “Following data collection, three researchers independently analysed the 100 transcripts in NVivo and extracted a list of items deemed important to explaining EHR-linked registers. Following this, each consultation transcript was checked against these items'. The rationale for this approach to the analysis of the consultations is not clear. How was the “list of items deemed important” identified? What was the process? And how many analysts/raters were involved?

There is minimal information pertaining to the findings of the focus groups. This does not provide the reader with an understanding of this phase of the research. Why was it important? Could the next phase of the study have been done without this phase?

How was the training developed? What aspects of the focus group findings fed into the training?

The same difficulty arises with the findings relating to the “18 items derived from earlier analyses of focus group and consultation data”. How many items were derived from the focus groups? How many were derived from the initial analysis of the consultations?

The team has a whole has expertise in analysing and reporting analysis of focus group data and other qualitative data. Currently, the reporting of both the analyses and the findings is not transparent in the manuscript so the reader cannot understand how the authors got from the data to the findings. In addition, the findings are only minimally reported. They need to be expanded
In the discussion, the authors conclude “Service users value transparency and control over the process, and future training should account for this”. How was this manifested in the clinician-service user consultations? This is important for future implementation – how is this explained to service users effectively?

Relatively little of the discussion is concerned with the findings of the current piece of work. This should be addressed.

**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