Reviewer’s report

Title: How Personal and Standardized Coordination Impact Implementation of Integrated Care

Version: 4 Date: 19 April 2015

Reviewer: Jeffrey Fuller

Reviewer’s report:

The paper has been strengthened and is very well written. The material from the three cases to illustrate the use of personal coordination strategies to overcome standardised coordination procedures does add richness. The paper does add useful material to the debate about hard (standardised) and soft (personal) integration strategies.

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISION_STUDY LIMITATION

While there will be a limit to the analysis that can be extracted from any research design, I still consider that the study has failed to address why personal coordination has not been more effective more broadly in overcoming the barriers of getting better integration across services. Perhaps this need simply to be acknowledged as a limitation of the study, in being unable to ascertain the barriers to personal coordination and in what circumstances does it appear to not overcome integration problems.

The paper does not deal with the issue of personality characteristics, which seems intuitively obvious, that these will impact on an individual’s propensity to want to work with others.

While the revised section (272-328) has described what key staff (leaders) in services did to overcome standardised coordination barriers, there is no analysis on what enabled these staff to do these things. Maybe the data were not sufficient to elucidate this, although personal and organisational factors are described in the prior sections. Why is this relevant? In my view, this is relevant because of your recommendations in the conclusion about promoting opportunities for interaction amongst staff and leaders, so as to develop trust history and a shared mission. This may be the solution and yes you do have some evidence about these strategies, but we don’t know enough about why some leaders appear to do well on personal coordination strategies and others do not. Simply getting existing leaders together may not be enough if they don’t have a headset for working collaboratively and a comfort with uncertainty which is a feature of inter-organisational relations.

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISION

Regarding the heading “leadership priorities” (line 241) – I read the section still to be about service priorities.
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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