Reviewer's report

Title: Collaboration processes and perceived integration effectiveness in primary care: a longitudinal mixed-methods study

Version: 2  Date: 11 July 2015

Reviewer: Terhi Lemetti

Reviewer's report:

A. Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Aim of the study is unclear. Aim was “to explore how changes in collaboration processes over time are related to perceived degree of integration effectiveness from professional, organizational and system perspective”. Effectiveness toward what should be defined more accurately. Currently, it comes impression that aim is effectiveness of implementation process of the ICPs or effectively achieved integrated care through ICPs or effectively developed integrated care through improvement of collaboration processes which were developed help with the ICPs. But it has not been clearly stated in the manuscript. The questions in the semi-structured interview scheme included lots of questions from the success of the projects, not perceived degree of the integrated care.

2. Research questions number 3) is also unclear. Effectiveness of what? Currently, it comes also impression that it means effectiveness of implementation process of the ICPs or effectively achieved integrated care through ICPs or effectively developed integrated care through improvement of collaboration processes which were developed help with the ICPs. But it has not been clearly stated in the manuscript.

3. The interviews did include open-ended questions. There were not clearly described how the answers of those questions were analyzed and are those findings presented in the results. Authors should give example of the qualitative analysis. If the coding were used also on answers of those questions, it remain unclear.

4. There were used questionnaire in the data collection process in organizational level and professional level. Start (T0) in the organizational level the questionnaire based on the model of Bell et al. were used or the questionnaire developed by the authors based in model Bell et al? That remain unclear. It was also unclear that were questionnaire in the end (T1) the same questionnaire but modified version (line 221-224)? It is unclear how authors modified questionnaire and were permission asked from Bell et al or was the questionnaire developed by the authors based in model Bell et al. It is also unclear were questionnaire in professional level same questionnaire that in organizational level. Why on professional level measurement was conducted only at the end (T1)?

5. It remain unclear why the Rainbow Model of Integrated Care (RMIC) were used only partly. The model include also clinical or service integration. Although,
there was “strengths and weakness of this study” – section explained why the patient’s perspective were missing and highlighted the importance of that perspective. It should be discussed in “Discussion” – section how that should take into account in the interpreting the results.

6. “Ethics” – section did not explain the information about asking verbal and written the voluntary informed consent from the interviews, could the participants withdraw from the study at any stage, were participants anonymity protected (if there were qualitative analysis from the open-ended questions) and how the data were stored.

B. Minor Essential Revisions

1. There should be mention that purposive sampling were used.

A. Discretionary Revisions

1. It would be clearer if the abstract included clarification that the study is about the integration of health and social services, and included also time frame from the data collection.

2. Main findings and the relevance to clinical practice is unclear. Currently, it comes impression that this study findings suggest that optimal implementation of integrated care need ICPs with multifocal perspectives and collaborative processes. But is has not been clearly stated in the manuscript.

3. I would revise to have Table from participants, data collection, measures and analysis. That could include the subgroups, measurement levels, characteristics of the participants (which is not described clearly), sample size, data collection methods, data analysis methods, measuring points, etc. Currently, the reader have to search those in different parts of the manuscript and it confuses the reader.

4. In discussion section (line 465-466) is mention of “theory of action” which seems to be missing from background section. It remain unclear what authors meant with that.

5. It remain unclear why the results of the measurements were discussed based on trust-based and control-based collaboration mechanism and why the results were not discussed based on the Rainbow Model of Integrated Care (RMIC) which were used to define the concept of the integrated care and the model of Bell, Kaats and Opheij which were used to describe the collaboration processes over time.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declaration of competing interests:

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The reviewer is a researcher who research topic is on collaboration between nurses who work in hospital and primary healthcare on older people nursing care. Not competing interest exist on reviewer point of view.

Considering the following questions:

a) No, I have not the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this paper, either now or in the future.

b) No, I do not hold any stocks or shares in an organization that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this paper, either now or in the future.

c) No, I do not hold or currently apply for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript. I do not have received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript.

d) No, I do not have any other financial competing interests.

e) No, I do not have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper. Reviewer research topic is on collaboration between nurses who work in hospital and primary healthcare on older people nursing care. Not competing interest exist on reviewer point of view.

I declare that I have no competing interests.