Reviewer's report

**Title:** Exploring conditions for implementation of national stroke guidelines in out-patient health care - a mixed-methods pilot study

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 29 May 2015

**Reviewer:** Louise Craig

**Reviewer's report:**

1. **Is the question posed by the authors well defined?**
   The aim needs to feature earlier on in the manuscript and be clearer i.e. what does conditions mean – ‘context’ instead of condition and out-patient healthcare settings may be more fitting than “out-patient healthcare context”. I am not convinced that this is what the study solely focuses and reports on – to me it should be labeled more as a feasibility study.

Implementation of guidelines is a key area and conducting preliminary work prior to implementation is important. However, for me the necessity and purpose of this work i.e. to develop the implementation intervention OR identify pre-implementation contextual factors OR test the feasibility of the study design is not justified. It appears to have parts of these areas which makes for a confusing read.

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

2. **Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
   Although, a mixed method approach is valuable there appears to be a number of different methods used. Would observation and interviews not have provided enough information to report on ‘conditions’. I am unclear why validated and used clinical tools needed to be tested for feasibility. For me there is a lack of justification as to why patient recruitment was been tested. Also, what type of observation was used – researcher observation?. This in itsel收益 very complex and rich data of which does not appear to be utilized to study the ‘conditions’.

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

3. **Are the data sound?**
   Yes, I have no reason to suggest that the data is not reliable.

4. **Do the figures appear to be genuine, i.e. without evidence of manipulation?**
   Yes, the data appears genuine without evidence of manipulation.

5. **Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?**
Aim needs to reflect the study more appropriately. Text heavy tables make this hard to interpret. Analysis section is unclear and the how the actual theoretical framework was used i.e. to interpret the qualitative data is not well explained.

Major Compulsory Revisions

6. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
These sections need to be tightened up. For example, there are new findings presented in the discussion section.

7. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
No, I can not locate these.

Major Compulsory Revisions

8. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
Yes, this is a precursor study of a main trial planned to investigate a leadership intervention. Little is given to understanding how this study may inform the development of this intervention though.

Discretionary Revisions

9. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
No, given the title I would expect to see issues around barriers and enablers and environment and social factors that need to be considered in these settings and how these may differ by setting.

Minor Essential Revisions

10. Is the writing acceptable?
It is a lengthy manuscript and needs to be edited to not only focus but remove unnecessary text.

Minor Essential Revisions

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