Reviewer’s report

Title: South African Primary Health Care Allied Health Clinical Practice Guidelines: The big picture

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Reviewer: Eileen McKinlay

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South African Primary Health Care Allied Health Clinical Practice Guidelines: the big picture

Originality: Little is written about CPGs for allied health professions. This is a needed paper.

Quality: The writing quality is good and the paper is very readable.

Title: accurately reflects content

Abstract: Concise and understandable

Introduction: What is written is understandable however I felt to give context two sections were missing: a section on allied health (AH) disciplines and their role in health care delivery and a section on the context of health care in South Africa. The former should list which disciplines are normally included in the AH category and why they are critical to health care delivery. The latter is touched on throughout the paper but I am still unclear about what the main health issues in SA are (communicable vs non-communicable diseases, acute vs chronic illness, health inequalities etc) and how health care is structured: the paper noted a mix of public vs private care- but which sections of the population get what and how?, role of health insurers (Figure 2 suggests a considerable impact); how is PHC structured). Pg 4 Line 35 (worth noting AH have specific skills sets in assessing physical and psychosocial aspects of health). Pg 4 line 30 the term 'hearing' is used but 'audiology' later.

Methods: Well explained. Pg 5 line 10 note where pre-determined clusters by discipline or organizationally? The SAGE project needed a brief explanation- it is mentioned later: reference any published papers at this point. Were there insurers in any groups (Table one notes Medical Aid but is that the same thing as insurers??), if not, note why not given they seem to have considerable impact on health care delivery (mentioned in Figure 2 and 3). I was not entirely sure what a 'first pass, birds eye view' is (perhaps explain further or use a less colloquial terms or reference to this as an analytical method).

The idea of social network sampling is interesting (Page 6); the linkage between the paragraph first noting this (line 1-16) and the following paragraph on Researchers relationships could be improved in case the reader misses the connection.

Again I was not sure what the term 'first pass' meant (can you reference or explain further).
Explain how 'transcript analysis was undertaken independently' (Pg 7 line 23)

Results: Well presented

Section on players was helpful. Pg 8, line 25 "other hats noted by the 'symbol'". Table 1 helpful but not sure about the Figure 1 as I found hard to read.

Advice: Pg 9 line 1 'regularly'

Sectors and collaboration: this seemed to focus only on rehabilitation. Is there a role for AH in SA re patients with long-term/chronic conditions or multimorbidity (SA may be different to other countries?) Pg 9 line 57: this comment seems to convey the idea of local adaptation which is often referred to in guideline literature- could this be picked up later as being important to guideline implementation.

Pg 10 line18 The idea of 'service substitution' is important. Did this mean different AH disciplines substituted for each other or did some sort of interprofessional collaboration occur? Pg 12 line 35 was the idea of local pathways been suggested- where high level evidence is tailored to local circumstance or local providers?

Pg 13 line 36 Mental health is not mentioned??

Discussion: Well written but seemed a bit brief in terms of balance with other sections and the comprehensiveness of the Findings. What about issues to do with health care funding, insurance, barriers to referrals to AH and interdisciplinary/interprofessional teamwork (or lack of- you noted that CPGs are generally silo-ed in the introduction).

Presentation: The writing quality is good. A few missing full stops. I found Figure 2 very hard to follow.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes
Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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