Reviewer's report

Title: Quality improvement collaboratives and the wisdom of crowds: spread explained by perceived success at group level

Version: 1 Date: 6 November 2013

Reviewer: Carola Orrego

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting article that explores the determinants of QI success with a particular focus on dissemination strategies.

Major Compulsory Revision

To be considered for publication, authors should add relevant information regarding the following aspects:

Research question and hypothesis: an operational definition of dissemination and spread used for the study analysis is needed. This definition should clarify the criteria used for the variable construction and the hypothesis formulation.

The traditional understanding of the function described for the dissemination in the QIC is referred to the change strategies and good practices of the implemented project (in the specific topic) and how health care professionals increase their awareness about the importance of the improvement opportunity in each topic. In this article, authors use the concept of dissemination and spread more broadly, referred to the spread of the culture of continuous quality improvement more than to the internal dissemination of good practices of the QIC. Authors need to make explicit this differentiation.

Professionals and institutions involved: Authors should provide clear, ordered and explicit information on the number of participants, surveys sent and response rate by type of professionals, hospital and topic. They could develop a figure or outline on the actual situation of the study in terms of participation (this could replace Figure number 1).

Confounding factors: it would also be interesting if the authors explicit the fact that higher or lower dissemination process could be also related with other factors, not specifically studied in this paper but too important not to be considered. As an example, the type of topic covered could influence the effect in spreading (understanding that a specific topic - such as surgical infection prevention - is not the same than a broader one - such as a process redesign project).

Scale and questionnaire: Authors should provide detailed information about the contents and ways of survey/questionnaire administration, and eventually give more information about their results by hospital, professionals and topic.

Risk of bias: Authors should include in the limitations section, the risk of bias
regarding the type of respondents (responsible of QI, project responsible or hospital) and response rates.

Minor Essential Revisions

Authors should review the document to correct (minor) issues in composition and orthography.

Discretionary Revisions

Statistical analysis: The analysis shows a high level of correlation, but it does not take into account other potential confounding factors. Authors should justify and make comment regarding this fact.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests