Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of a Natural Experiment in the National Dental Practice-Based Research Network on Treatment for Early Dental Decay

Version: 1 Date: 31 May 2014

Reviewer: Eleftherios Kaklamanos

Reviewer's report:

The present paper presents the findings of a retrospective study regarding the impact of National Dental PBRN engagement and attendance at a topic-focused, national meeting on the treatment for early caries.

The subject is worth investigating in terms of designing strategies to translate current scientific evidence into routine clinical practice. In general, the work is original, important and in most parts well defined. Presentation and writing are good. However, I feel that the conditions under which the diagnostic codes were obtained need further clarification, and that the abstract does not adequately capture the objective or the limitations of the work.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

It should be mentioned in the text whether caries diagnosis was set after clinical examination only or radiographic control was performed as well. Proper early caries diagnosis cannot be performed and evidence based treatment cannot be implemented unless x-rays have been used for the interproximal areas.

The abstract should be changed to capture the exact objective of the present work. Moreover, the limitations of the current work should be further discussed in case of lack of radiographic assessment, as well as, in the light of the practice guidelines, that appear to have been released in 2008 also (2008 Mar 31 - www.guideline.gov), the same year as the NDPBRN meeting. How was the presentation of these practice guidelines made to the practice dentists?

Minor essential revisions:

Explanations for the codes F83, F84, F892 & F893 should be provided as well.

Discretionary Revisions: None

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' below