Reviewer’s report

Title: Barriers and facilitators for the management of vertigo: a qualitative study with primary care providers

Version: 0 Date: 27 Nov 2017

Reviewer: Tim Stokes

Reviewer’s report:

This study explores the barriers and facilitators to the management of vertigo by primary care providers in Germany. It is a qualitative study, coding the interviews into an existing theoretical framework.

The study offers some new knowledge re vertigo; its findings re guideline implementation are already well reported in the literature.

Overall this study would benefit from significant restructuring to better present the results of the interviews.

Major comments:

1. Background p4., LL3-4. It does not fit with the findings of this study to state that "the diagnosis of vertigo is mostly quite straightforward." This section needs re-wording.

2. Interview structure. P.6, LL6-17. It is not clear why two different implementation theory approaches have been synthesised: TDR (which focuses on individual behaviour change and uses a psychological framework) and CFIR. It is noted that CFIR does allow exploration of patient-practitioner interactions and individual behaviour change in its "individuals involved" domain. This approach, and structuring into COM-B needs justification and the approach needs addressing in the discussion (comment 5.).

3. Content analysis, p. 8, LL 16-20. A pre-existing coding frame is used - it therefore needs to be explicitly stated that a deductive approach to coding has been used.

4. Analysis of the interviews pp.12-17. This section presents a large amount of data across a wide range of domains - it is difficult to follow the narrative. It is also difficult to gain a detailed understanding of the individual themes presented. This section would benefit from significant restructuring - one option might be to focus specifically on barriers and facilitators as defined by the model; and not report the guideline related findings.

5. Discussion. Strengths/Limitations LL 16-21. Need to reflect on merits of merging implementation frameworks
6. Discussion, p.24 LL3-4. It is clear from the methods this is a highly selected sample of participants as they were recruited from another vertigo related study. They are therefore likely to be "enthusiasts" in the management of vertigo and may not be typical of the "average" PCP. This needs reflecting on.

Minor comments:

7. Saturation. P.20, LL6-7. It should be clarified that the reference to "13 interviews sufficient to achieve saturation" refers to qualitative studies using a particular theoretical approach (theory of planned behaviour) - as stated in reference 32.

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