**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** Clinical performance comparators in audit and feedback: a review of theory and evidence  

**Version:** 0  
**Date:** 03 Mar 2019  

**Reviewer:** Kathleen Bagot  

**Reviewer's report:**  

IMPS-D-19-00007  

Clinical performance comparators in audit and feedback: a review of theory and evidence  

Thank you for the opportunity to review the above manuscript. The manuscript presents a multi-method study reviewing the often-used audit and feedback process, specifically considering the selection and use of comparators. This manuscript is very well structured, covering key elements and is very well written. There are multiple strengths to the current study, including the multiple methods used: the secondary analysis of available results, extending results by qualitative accounts of A&F and incorporations of theoretically-based explanations. Drawing on behavioural and social sciences to explore and explain A&F practices is a significant contribution to quality improvement approaches. The limitations were well considered and the authors conclude with suggestions when selecting comparators.

I have very few comments for the authors to consider:

- Page 4, line 58 - when describing the 2017 review, reference is made to electronic A&F. While the authors indicate that the results are limited to the time period of the reviews, I wondered what the reference to electronic meant? Some brief explanation (e.g., example, what proportion if known) as this latter review extends the literature sourced a further 5 years than the initial review, to 2016.

- Page 6, line 45 - when considering '… that benchmarking was more effective… '', is this perceptions of effectiveness from participants in the qualitative work or were qualitative studies only selected based on actual effectiveness results?

- Given the paucity of A&F literature drawing on behavioural and/or social science theories, and the clear contributions possible of their inclusion, I wonder if the authors could include some steps for those considering A&F comparators as to how to incorporate a theoretical perspective in their work, in a meaningful way.

Overall, the paper was of great interest, very informative and a pleasure to read.
Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

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

Acceptable

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