

Reviewer's report

Title: Exploring the black box of quality improvement collaboratives: modelling relations between conditions, applied changes and outcomes

Version: 1 **Date:** 10 April 2009

Reviewer: Martin Lee

Reviewer's report:

I found this to be an interesting and useful paper with good utilization of hierarchical linear modeling. I only have a few suggestions for improving the clarity of the paper:

- 1) The grammar requires some cleaning, e.g. in the Introduction: "researchers urge for more research" and "study intends to contribute". In addition, I found the paper difficult to read in places, particularly in the results and discussion sections. I would suggest that they have the paper read and edited by a medical writer.
- 2) Table 2: As the variables being summarized here are primarily ordinal, the summary statistics should be median and interquartile range.
- 3) Table 4 is a bit difficult to read. The authors have tried to combine several statistical outcomes into the same table making it very difficult to understand what is being presented. I am not sure why both the variance/covariances AND the correlations are given. Also, it is not clear why the level 2 and 3 matrices have mostly blank values in their respective tables.

However, I believe these are relatively minor corrections and the paper should be accepted when these issues are attended to.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.