Author's response to reviews

Title: Developing a facilitation model to promote organisational development in primary care practices

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Alex

Thank-you for providing us with the opportunity to resubmit the manuscript. We detail the changes that we have made in response to the reviewers comments below:

List of requested changes and author responses

We would like to thank both reviewers for taking the time to read the paper and comment in some detail.

Reviewer 1:
"Consider re-titling to emphasise the wider message that the paper is about enabling practices to change through facilitation. Organizational development and the Maturity Matrix are organizing frameworks, perhaps an important framework worthy of dissemination and widespread use, but the paper's findings and message is not really about the matrix. It is about assisting practices to learn and change."

Reviewer 2
"My concern here is that the research question does not adequately reflect the research process reported and the authors should consider revising the question."

We considered both these comments to be fundamental to revising the paper. Reviewers 1 and 2 both suggested that a change was needed and Reviewer 1 suggested the nature of the change. We therefore refocused the introduction to reposition the research in the context of the wider potential message of how a facilitation process can best support growth and development in practices. The title and introduction reflect this change. Pages 1-5

Reviewer 2:
"I am also confused about what the authors mean by organisational development? Do they mean the development of general practice as a learning organisation? If so this should be said. There are many aspects of organisational development and this area needs clarification."

We accept reviewer 2's concerns re clarifying the term organisational development and have made changes to the introduction to address these concerns.

To clarify for the reviewer:

We did not refer to organisational learning theory as this was not the focus of our article. We were not focusing on the different types of learning experienced by the practice such as single or double loop learning (organisational learning), but instead on planned approaches to achieving incremental change where the practice visitor as a facilitator could enable rather than educate practices (organisational development).

Organisational development theory is distinct from organisational learning theory. There are many theories
of organisational change and for this reason both the Academy of Management Review and the Annual Review of Psychology publish review articles by leading academics critiquing developments in the wider field of organisational change. We deliberately included references to two review articles by that focused on organisational development in our original submission. We also included a reference to a previous review article by the authors where the use of different theories and their application to quality improvement in general practice had been discussed.

To clarify for the reader:

To address Reviewer 2's concerns, we have rewritten our introduction to organisational development and included the other major review articles of theories of organisational development published in the Academy of Management Review and the Annual Review of Psychology. Pages 1-5

Reviewer 2: Appropriateness of methods

Reviewer 2 suggested that we should measure outcomes of the facilitation process by asking practices what they thought about the facilitator and also by examining whether practices moved forwards.

As reviewer 1 suggested, this study offers a "creative framework to organize efforts". Our response to Reviewer 2 is that this is a study of the facilitation process itself. It is not our aim to evaluate the performance of individual facilitators but rather to consider the facilitation process against a theoretical framework. This method of considering a process against a theoretical framework has also been adopted to consider the process of care experienced by the older population (recent submission to Health and Social Care Journal). We agree with reviewer 1 that the method is appropriate.

Related to both Reviewers comments about re-titling, we reflected on whether the use of the word "evaluation" may lead the reader to expect outcome data. We have therefore removed this word from the title and text.

Reviewer 2: Verbal transcripts

"I'm not sure analysing verbal transcripts of the facilitators' performance is the best way to undertake this research. Surely this misses issues such as non-verbal language which are recognised to be important to the role of facilitating."

We agree with reviewer 2 that the use of verbal transcripts alone limits the robustness of the data collected. To an extent, resources dictated the method. We have included this criticism in our limitations section. However, even with this method we were able to detect patterns of communication that could be analysed against the theoretical framework. If the aim had been to evaluate individual facilitator performance and its impact on outcomes than the use of verbal transcripts alone would have been more problematical, but as explained above, this was not the aim of the study. In addition, we note that reviewer one did not comment of this aspect of the study.

Reviewer 2: Sampling framework

We agree with Reviewer 2's comments regarding the sampling framework and have acknowledged this as a weakness in the limitations section. Page 15

Reviewer 1 and Reviewer 2: The need to insert transcript comments in the main body of text.

We agree with both reviewers' comments and have amended the paper accordingly. Pages 10-14

Reviewer 2: data collection

We have increased the level of detail slightly without compromising the anonymity of the practices and facilitators. We are happy to provide the dates and time of facilitations, details of the practices and of the facilitators to the editor if requested. However, we do not believe that it is relevant to publish this information and are concerned that to do so would compromise confidentiality of both the facilitators and practices. We have also not amended the article to include outcome measures for the reasons stated above. Page 6
Reviewer 2: Higher order facilitation skills

Our response to Reviewer 2 is that we defined what was meant by higher order facilitation skills in the section where we constructed the model and were therefore proactively deciding to use that term to describe data in the results section. We accept the comment regarding using the discussion section to consider alternative interpretations as to why the use of higher order skills was inconsistent. We made a change to a discussion point to address this. Page 15

Reviewer 2: Acceptability of writing

We have made a number of the changes requested by the Reviewer 2.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course

Melody Rhydderch