Reviewer's report

Title: Planning and evaluating a multi-faceted influenza vaccination implementation strategy for health care workers in acute health care settings

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Reviewer: Sarah Head

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The paper addresses an important area in prevention and control of influenza, and any positive findings could potentially benefit staff and patients in acute healthcare. However, some of the language is difficult to understand and it is difficult to draw a clear conclusion / message from the paper. As a result, I am still unsure if there are any useful findings from this paper. There appears to be a large amount of information available and I wonder if there is actually too much information (ie. Enough for more than one publication) and whether this is contributing to the lack of a clear message.

I do not think it is suitable for publication in it’s current state, but I have found it difficult classify revisions as major compulsory or discretionary.

1. BACKGROUND
Para 1. – I would not start with “as is commonly known” – does not read well.

Is it worth putting a statement here acknowledging the additional value of vaccinating the workforce since they are (generally) younger and hence will mount a more effective immune response than the (generally) older patient population? (Hence the older patient population relies on the immunity of the younger staff population for some of their protection from influenza. )

P3S3 – would be more informative to say “over x years they increased vaccine uptake from y% to z% (p=..)”

P3S5 – unclear what exactly you mean by “long-term care investigation” – I think you mean the setting was not acute care (hence may not be generalisable to acute care setting) but it reads as if the investigation/intervention took place over a long period of time.

P3 Last sentence – “evaluate our intervention program and evaluate the short and long term process”. I find this difficult to understand – is this not just “evaluating the intervention”?

2. METHODS:

The methods are long and difficult to navigate. This paper is will be of interest to those who work in communicable disease control but who may not have extensive understanding of qualitative research methods. Therefore, there needs to be very clear and consistent signposting of the stages of the IM method ie. Using the same titles consistently throughout the paper will avoid confusion
Paragraph 2 – this is difficult to understand and not clear to international readers – ie. Did the study get ethics approval?

The title “developing the programme” on page 6 appears to actually be “IM Method” – since in includes the 6 steps of the method and actually includes needs assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation.

Developing the programme. Step one. Needs assessment. – you should refer to table 1 in this text.

Developing the programme. Step two. Proximal program objectives. – the first sentence of this paragraph is very long and difficult to understand (could you put a full stop after “changeability”?)

Developing the programme. Step two. Proximal program objectives. Paragraph 1. Sentence 1. ?better to use “intentional or not” in place of “planned or not”.

Developing the programme. Step three. Selection of methods and strategies. This is an example of where the labelling of sections becomes inconsistent with the titles of the 6 steps outlined at the beginning of methods.

Developing the programme. Step three. Selection of methods and strategies Sentence 3. Would be helpful to have more information about who/what exactly the “communication expert” is.

Developing the programme. Step three. Selection of methods and strategies Sentence 5. Meaning is unclear. Would this be clearer?

“ For example, with HCWs who intentionally don’t get vaccinated it is most important to provide clear information in order to eliminate any possible misunderstandings. …… In contrast, amongst HCWs who unintentionally remain unvaccinated it is more important to create awareness of their behaviour and the consequences…… “

Developing the programme. Step three

Developing the programme. Step four. Planning the programme Sentence 9 – not clear what “pins” are – do you mean badges?

Developing the programme. Step four. Planning the programme – last sentence. It is not clear what the true difference is between the intervention and control group – the control group appears to have access the intervention group materials?

3. RESULTS:

This section could be clearer. After reading I do not have a clear understanding of exactly how the evaluation was carried out and criteria used for scoring/measuring different qualitative elements. It is not clear exactly how “being appealing” was measured (ie. Table 4 results).

I apologise if I have misunderstood the results but Table 4 appears to show that the intervention group were less supportive of the materials (eg. Folder/video/poster) than the control group?

Quantitative Evaluation of the implementation process in the intervention group – Para 2 – could this be more clearly demonstrated in a table format?
Quantitative Evaluation of the implementation process in the intervention group – Para 3 sentence 1 – not sure why this sentence is here?

Quantitative Evaluation of the implementation process in the intervention group – Para 3. Last sentence. “despite all efforts….,” – not clear – do you mean that vaccination uptake rates remained low?

4. DISCUSSION:
Para 1 Sentence 1 – this is v long and difficult to understand- what about “In this article we intended to demonstrate how to develop an intervention to improve influenza vaccination uptake amongst HCWs”

Para 1 Sentence 3 – what about “this evaluation showed that during an influenza pandemic communication tools are used and rated differently compared to during a typical influenza season”

Para 1 Sentence 5 – good to give exact values of levels of attendance at meetings rather than just “higher attendance”

Para 1 Last sentence – “these were most appreciated…” bit vague – how was this measured?

5. CONCLUSION:
P1S1 – very unclear ? what about “we developed a vaccination intervention and evaluated this programmes”

From the results/conclusion it appears that an assumption has been made that people finding the posters/materials appealing will translate into changing their health beliefs and hence improve uptake of influenza vaccine. For such a subject area I would place high value on a study that examines influenza immunisation uptake in HCWs as an outcome for the evaluation of an immunisation strategy. I do appreciate that this may not have been the purpose of this paper. However, for the paper to have value there needs to be a clearer link between the outcomes of the evaluation and how this can translate to practical health actions/policy around immunisation of HCWs with influenza vaccine.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'