Reviewer's report

Title: A tool to analyze the transferability of health promotion interventions

Version: 3 Date: 16 August 2013

Reviewer: Lucie Rychetnik

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MS ID : 3344129649626985
Title : A tool to analyze the transferability of health promotion interventions
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This paper describes a very interesting and innovative study that explored the important and as yet emerging area of developing explicit criteria to assess the transferability of interventions. The authors applied a mixed methods process to identify and then refine relevant criteria for considering issues of transferability – both at the stages of planning, and of evaluating, health promotion interventions. The development process and final tool: ASTAIRE are presented, and the tool is considered in the light of other literature.

The paper makes a valuable contribution and the tool is an important development that has great potential to inform practice – and to assist further developments in this important field of research translation.

I appreciate the authors wish to make the tool as widely applicable as possible, but their final conclusion about the two types of tools and four different uses (p13) does rather run the risk of it trying to be all things to all people. The diagnostic usage in particular is rather unclear in the text of the paper. Maybe a flow diagram of the levels and uses (and pointing to the relevant tool) would make this more clear.

While the tool was developed using an empirical process- rather than driven by existing models - the authors comparison to other literature in the discussion is important. I believe therefore they could be more comprehensive in their consideration and comparison of their tool with previous work in this area. Particularly other directly relevant literature that examines and applies criteria for transferability and could be incorporated into the introduction and/or discussion e.g.

- Evaluating the relevance, generalization, and applicability of research—issues in external validation and translation methodology. Green LW, Glasgow RE. Eval Health Prof. 2006;29(1):126–153

And an adaptation and application of the criteria suggested in the above:
• Diabetes prevention research: a systematic review of external validity in lifestyle interventions. Rachel A Laws, Alexis B St George, Lucie Rychetnik, Adrian E Bauman


Other minor issues:

The use of the term ‘dose response’ is not usual (line 21, p3) – dose response would normally refer to different responses relative to the dose of the intervention (not different effects on different recipients eg effect modification). The unusual use of standard terminology is potentially confusing – and should either not be included, or at least acknowledged and explained.

More explanation of the shapes in Figure would be useful. While the relevance of the ‘thickness’ of these groups is explained, the shape is unclear…does it have any significance – and if not, why are they all different shapes?

The sentence on line 30 (p8) is not clear. …‘no doubt in a logic of adaptation’…and needs to be more clearly explained.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests