Reviewer's report

Title: Mobilizing knowledge on intimate partner violence and child maltreatment: An integrative review

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Reviewer: Emma Howarth

Reviewer's report:

This paper reviews current evidence on strategies to mobilise and translate knowledge from research to decision makers and practitioners in the fields of intimate partner violence and child maltreatment. This paper has a number of strengths, the first of which is its timeliness given the growing evidence bases in the fields and the ever increasing focus on evidence based practice. A second is the broad focus of the review which considers different types of knowledge (not just research evidence) and translational activities targeted at a range of professionals, rather than simply those working in health. Finally, the authors take a comprehensive and systematic approach to identifying and appraising studies reporting on translation activities.

It is my opinion however that the quality of this paper is significantly weakened by the way in which the findings of these individual studies are integrated and reported. In general the results were difficult to follow and I felt some key information was missing, whilst other findings seemed to be impressions of the evidence base, rather than founded on the data that was (no doubt painstakingly) extracted for the purpose of this review. The knock on effect of this was that many of the conclusions and recommendations seemed to come out of the blue, despite these latter sections (from discussion of the framework onwards) of the paper being written in an accessible and fluent way. I do feel however that with the addition of some further information and re-organisation of this section, along with some more minor edits suggested below, this paper could be greatly improved and could have some impact in the IPV and CM fields.

Discretionary revisions

1. Background, 1st paragraph: The authors state that the two fields differ in terms of the amount and nature of research evidence available, although do not clarify further what they mean by this point. The relative maturity of an evidence base strikes me as something that might have a bearing on the KT efforts that ensue and therefore it would be useful to add a line or two to clarify

2. Results, the extent to IPV and CM specific KT research: In reporting the different types of study design the authors could perhaps think about making the categories a little more parsimonious by collapsing categories into experimental/RCT, quasi experimental, pre-post, other

Minor essential revisions

3. Background: The authors highlight the myriad terms used to describe
translational activities as one of the difficulties in this field yet refer to mobilisation in the title and translation in the text. If mobilisation refers to the overall effort of utilising knowledge and translation to a specific part of this process then this needs to be made much clearer in the opening section of this paper.

4. Background: It would be useful to set out for the non specialist reader why IPV and CM can be appropriately talked about together in the same article and indeed a single KT effort, so as to emphasise that there is a theoretical rationale for thinking about them together, although care does need to be taken to state that these fields whilst related are not synonymous. This would make the article more accessible to the reader with a general interest in KT rather than just to those working in the IPV/CM fields.

5. Background, knowledge translation, 3rd paragraph: Without knowledge of Weiss’ typology this sentence means very little. It needs some further clarification to make it less opaque as to what the term ‘use’ means in the context of this review.

6. Background, knowledge translation, 3rd paragraph: The sentence ends with a numerical reference. Either write the authors name in the text or place the e.g. in brackets.

7. Results, the extent to IPV and CM specific KT research: I would have found the information in this subsection more accessible if it had been tabulated.

8. Results, the extent to IPV and CM specific KT research: For me as a reader there was an issue pertaining to the order in which the results in this section are presented. It would be useful to first present descriptive information about the KT activities themselves, so the number of studies that evaluate IPV, CM or IPV+CM KT efforts, followed by the stakeholders to whom the KT interventions were directed and then the different methods used to translate the knowledge (the intervention so to speak), which is currently reported in the next section (moving this descriptive information form the next section would mean that this section becomes a more complete overview of the state of the KT activity in these fields). This could be followed by information about the studies: where they were conducted, what designs they used, and what outcomes were measured etc.

9. Effective KT strategies, 1st paragraph: Here I would be interested to know whether the method of translation varied systematically according to the field (i.e. IPV vs. CM vs. IPV+CM). Until fairly recently, integration between the two fields has been limited, and therefore the strategies used could feasibly differ between the areas. If they do not differ then this can be covered off by one line of text.

10. Discussion, end of 3rd paragraph: The point the authors make about cautious interpretation of impact on behaviour given the focus on detection and documentation needs further explanation.

Major compulsory revisions

11. Results: this section would be much clearer if the authors simply reported their results and moved their discussion of these results to the next section.

12. Intervention effectiveness, 1st paragraph: The authors conclude that ... in general interventions designed to improve IPV/CM-related knowledge/attitude
outcomes were successful’. Before drawing this conclusion the authors first need to give a narrative review of what the studies showed in terms of impact on knowledge and attitudes, otherwise this statement feels unfounded. To lend some structure to this overview the authors could think about describing the results using the taxonomy of interventions surfaced as part of this review. Some reference to the table containing a précis of what each study found is also necessary. However, given the next statement about the heterogeneity in the way this domain was measured, the authors need to be cautious about making any broad statement about the success of these studies as a whole. The reasons for this caution would be best highlighted in the discussion section.

13. Intervention effectiveness, 2nd paragraph: I echo the point above in relation to the description of results pertaining to behavioural and behavioural intention outcomes. The reference to other supporting literature needs to be moved out of this section.

14. Intervention effectiveness, 3rd and 4th paragraphs: The finding here is that the majority of articles did not examine the effectiveness of specific intervention components. A discussion of the importance of identifying ‘active ingredients’ and what these might be should be moved to the next section, however I am a bit uncertain as to how the authors have identified promising components of KT intervention given their point about the lack of studies with the potential to disaggregate aspects of complex interventions.

15. Barriers and facilitators: This section feels a little like the authors impression of the evidence rather than a systematic review of the factors identified in papers as barriers and facilitators, which I appreciate is in part a reflection of the evidence being considered. I feel it might have been helpful to tally the various barriers and facilitators mentioned across the papers, which could then have been summarised in a simple table. I would have been interested to know if there were any differences in the barriers and facilitator highlighted in IPV vs. CM studies – for example, not wanting to get involved may be more salient for IPV interventions than to CM intervention where the statutory duty is clearer. The authors do begin to allude to possible differences and it would have been interesting to consider this further. Other factors that may also be relevant to consider in this vein may be target group and type of intervention although I appreciate that the data are limited so perhaps it isn’t possible to say much about these.

16. Discussion: Following the paragraph that gives an overview of the review’s purpose it would be useful to reiterate the 3 key questions that the review specifically set out to consider, and in broad strokes what the key conclusions are in relation to each of these questions. From the reader’s perspective it would then be really useful to structure the discussion under these three question headings. Presently, the discussion section contains lots of really interesting points but lacks coherence.

17. Discussion, 3rd paragraph: The authors suggest that there is evidence to suggest that complex/multifaceted interventions may be most effective in enhancing knowledge and attitudes; however as it stands this conclusion isn’t really supported by the results. In fact the authors point out the weaknesses of
study design and heterogeneity in outcome measurement, which preclude this type of strong conclusion. Given the limitations of the data I would recommend a more tentative conclusion.

18. The authors don't really offer any conclusions based on their review of the evidence base. The paper really needs a paragraph to sum up the main conclusions based on the findings; which would then lead into a consideration of any recommendations.

19. On a positive note, I enjoyed reading the final three sections of the paper (framework, limitations, and conclusion) – the writing was fluent and the ideas clearly presented. It might be worth cross referencing the key points highlighted in the discussion of the framework to ensure that they are adequately described and discussed in the previous sections, which didn't always feel to be the case. Greater care needs to be taken to help the reader follow the threads through from the findings, via the discussion, to the recommendations.

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 I have no competing interests