Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluating complex health interventions: a critical analysis of the 'outcomes' concept

Version: 2 Date: 10 March 2009

Reviewer: Andrew Long

Reviewer's report:

I think that your responses to the questions raised are appropriate and have strengthened your argument. Below are a few minor suggestions which I would recommend. In summary, I feel that the article will make a valuable and significant contribution to the literature in this area, and hopefully lead to increased / widen breadth of understanding, and maybe (!) changes in research practice.

1. page 14: a minor grammatical point! (four lines from bottom) - dependent on (not dependent of) the patient's awareness ...


3. page 19: second line, you write ... mechanisms in the CMO framework ... While I know what C M & O relate to, this will not be the case for all readers. You need to spell this out. 'CMO's are also not necessary parts as such of programme theory, though central to the notion of realist evaluation (Pawson) ....

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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.