Author's response to reviews

Title: A systematic exploration of differences in contextual factors related to implementing the MOVE! Weight Management Program in VA: A Mixed Methods Study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Response to reviewers

Reviewer 1

Much of the content in the “Implementation Framework” section seems to involve details about measures and data collection—recommend moving this information to the Methods section.
Done.

The format for Table 2 is challenging, especially given that it covers 3 pages. I think it might be easier for readers to follow if the Quantitative Measures/Sample Qualitative Questions/Probes sections were placed in a separate table/appendix. Also it would help tremendously if the 6 constructs mentioned in Table 2 were listed somewhere in the narrative.
Table 2 has been eliminated. The six constructs and their definitions are now included in the “Implementation Framework” section of the narrative. A brief description of the quantitative and qualitative measures is provided in the “Measures and Data Collection Section”. Additional File 1 includes specific quantitative measures and qualitative questions.

Similarly, it would also be very helpful if there was a clearly identified “Measures” section in the Methods and a statement indicating what overlap (or not) there was between the quantitative and qualitative assessments, as well as a restatement/definition of “implementation effectiveness” as the primary study outcome.
There was almost complete overlap between the quantitative measures and qualitative measures. To make this clearer, and to provide the rationale for doing this, the following statements have been added to the “Measures and Data Collection” section: “The organizational factors affecting implementation effectiveness were measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data were used as a means of efficient data collection and analysis; qualitative data were used to validate the quantitative data and to provide greater insight into local implementation processes.” The definition of implementation effectiveness is restated in the first paragraph of the “Measures and Data Collection” section.

Various hypotheses are mentioned...A clear presentation of specific hypotheses in conjunction with the specific aims at the end of the Introduction would greatly enhance the manuscript.
We have added a specific hypothesis to the end of the introduction, as suggested, and have removed references to other hypotheses in the rest of the manuscript.

Although the manuscript presents some very interesting findings, its organization and length make it difficult to read.
We have deleted some text from the “Background” and “Implementation Framework” sections; these edits, plus the other changes we have made in response to the reviewers, hopefully make the manuscript easier to read.
Reviewer 2

Data Collection Procedures, first sentence: there needs to be a statement that the interview questions addressed the following components of the model, with a brief description of each of the components. Information about the number of questions and the Likert scale should follow that because in and of itself, it does not provide the specific information the reader needs to understand the data that was collected. It would also be helpful to say that the first set of questions collected quantitative data. We have added this information as suggested.

Qualitative Data coding, etc.
Second paragraph [that begins with ‘Constructs depicted in Figure 1’]: This paragraph is too long. It is hard for this reader, with strong background in qualitative data collection and analysis, to follow and to be sure I understand the procedures that were followed.
We have shortened this section and attempted to clarify our approach.

Also, unless Figure 1 and Table 2 will appear in the text near this section of the paper, I think it is not appropriate to expect that readers will want to flip back and forth between this section and the figure and the table.
We have eliminated Table 2, in response to Reviewer 1 and also in response to this comment. Instead, the constructs and their definitions are now included in the narrative in the “Implementation Framework” section, so the reader will be introduced to these before they get to the “Methods” section, and they won’t have to flip back as far. Hopefully Figure 1 will be included near the “Implementation Framework” section.

It is not clear to me if coding was a 2-step process or if the first four sentences of this paragraph serve as a summary of the coding process, with details following.
We have clarified this section. The coding process is described as a series of distinct steps (i.e., there is no summary description at the beginning).

Were codes available to coders or developed de novo?
Coding was done both deductively (i.e., codes available to coders, based on the organizational constructs of interest) and inductively (new themes identified). Hopefully this is clearer now.

A general question: If the interviews followed the a priori constructs (from Figure 1 and Table 2, I assume), what was the purpose of the coding? To refine the constructs? To verify them? To determine their applicability at each facility? To validate the model? If the latter, that wasn’t stated as the purpose of conducting the interviews.
The primary purpose of coding the interview responses according to the constructs was to verify their presence (or absence) for purposes of understanding important differences between low and high implementation sites. Interviewers encouraged open narrative responses to questions that were designed to be relatively broad and then probed for more details. Thus, coding was necessary to capture all references related to given constructs. Hopefully this has been clarified in the last paragraph of the “Background” section. Because the findings revealed that the constructs did indeed distinguish low implementation from high implementation sites, our methods also validated the model—as mentioned in the “Discussion” section.
Results: Implementation Effectiveness. First paragraph [which is too long and should be divided into two paragraphs]: it is not clear how the ‘ratings’ shown in Table 3 were arrived at or what the ratings were based on.

This section has been rewritten; in addition, the basis for obtaining these ratings has been clarified in the methods section, under both “Facility Selection” and “Measures and Data Collection”.

In Qualitative Coding Section, second paragraph, the sentence that begins with ‘The pairs of analysts…’ It is not clear what ‘rotated’ means.
A description has been added to clarify this.

I don’t think ‘groupthink’ is a good analytic term; I suggest deleting it and revising the definition [that was included in parentheses] and using it since it more clearly describes the purpose behind creating different pairs of analysts on a weekly basis.
We have made these changes.

The sentence that follows footnote [25]: ‘Each pair of analysts…its summaries’ [not ‘their’ since the referent is pair, not analysts.]
Corrected.

Second to last sentence, that begins with ‘The implementation researchers…’ needs to be tightened because it raises an important issue in qualitative research: the role of an investigator as analyst...However, this needs to be more carefully stated and the ways in which triangulation was used for validating and ensuring reliability in data analyses and limiting bias needs clarification. A reference to a good qualitative research theory and methods book would be helpful here.
You bring up an important and complex issue to address that is beyond the scope of this paper. We have added a reference and clarified that sentence to touch on this topic as suggested.

In the Abstract, Methods paragraph, third sentence: add the word ‘candidate’ in front of Veterans to accurately describe the selection criteria for facilities. I took this word from Table 3. With this word, the implication is that facilities were chosen based on participation rates for all Veterans.
Done.

In the Implementation Framework section, second paragraph, fourth sentence, add the word ‘candidate’ for the same reasons given in the preceding comment.
Done.

Reviewer 3
No revisions specified.