Reviewer’s report

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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Reviewer: Polly Noel

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This manuscript employs mixed-methods guided by theory to explore differences in contextual/organizational factors among 5 VA facilities that vary in level of MOVE! program implementation. In spite of the small number of facilities, the qualitative data are interesting.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. It would be informative to provide more details about the semi-structured interview, such as the questions themselves and how they mapped on to the CFIR constructs, or at least the number of questions and the constructs they covered.

2. The Methods indicate that the quantitative data were derived from the Klein et al., implementation model (or questionnaire?), while the qualitative data were based upon the CFIR, but it is not entirely clear to what extent the two overlap. The Klein et al model is described as having 5 constructs, which do equate with the item groupings in the Appendix. It is somewhat confusing because the 4 subheadings for the qualitative results correspond to the same 5 constructs (2 are combined into one subheading). Do the CFIR and Klein et al model use the same constructs, or was the CFIR simply used to develop questions for the semi-structured interview questions and the answers to these categorized within the Klein et al., constructs? Either way, it would be helpful to include a brief description of the CFIR for readers who are unfamiliar with it and explain how it corresponds to the Klein et al., model.

3. The results section does not mention the results of the t-test, which is alluded to in the abstract and discussion. But the value of the t-test for such a small sample is questionable, especially since it does not adjust for the nesting of subjects within facilities. Consider using the quantitative data for some type of non-parametric test (e.g., ranks). Otherwise, the limitations of the quantitative data should be stressed in the discussion and abstraction.

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. Although mentioned in the abstract, the methods do not clearly specify whether or not the sites were VA medical centers or outpatient clinics.
2. Site selection was apparently based upon “the number of patients enrolled …as a proportion of an estimate of the number of eligible patients based on an estimated prevalence of 72%”. Although Table 2 reports the number enrolled for each site, it would be helpful to know what proportion that represents of “eligible” patients (whether estimated or actual).

3. Please include the actual number of patients that the “transition” site had enrolled by October 2007.

4. Quantitative Data Section in Methods: The first sentence indicates that responses were elicited to 18 “closed-ended” questions and refers the reader to the Additional File. The items in the Appendix, however, are statements, not questions. Closed-ended questions are those that can be answered by a “yes” or “no” response, or a brief phrase (e.g., Where were you born?). It seems more appropriate to indicate that subjects rated their level of agreement with the 18 items using a Likert-scale.

5. Table 2 indicates that the “Midwest” clinic had “Level 4 – Intensive outpatient lifestyle counseling,” which seems inconsistent with Table 1’s description of Level 4 as involving “medical” management (e.g., VLCDs). Please correct or clarify.

Discretionary Revisions

1. Given the limitations of the quantitative data, the qualitative data are more compelling. Two of the most interesting pieces of qualitative data are that: 1) none of the facilities had implemented the telephone support, which is described as a “mandatory” component; and 2) that one site referred their patients to community-based programs with no follow-up. The authors are encouraged to more systematically document what aspects of the program were and were not implemented at the various sites, if this information is available in the data.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

Although I have received salary and funding from the Department of Veterans Affairs, I do not believe that it would gain or lose financially from the publication of this paper. Therefore, I declare that I have no competing interests below.