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: Carolyn Wallace

Reviewer's report:

I commend the authors of this manuscript for undertaking the research on which this manuscript is based and for using a mixed methods approach. Although I have made many comments, I hope that they will be read in the spirit in which I intended them: positive; and my honest attempt to clarify the purpose, methods and results that were presented in this manuscript.

Major Compulsory Revisions

Background

1. 1st paragraph: last sentence is unclear. ‘Taking a toll among Veterans’ does not provide information to the reader; ‘burden of illness’ should be clarified so that the reader understands whether it refers to providers, VHA or something else.

2. 2nd paragraph: ‘challenge’ does not have a clear referent. The purpose of the MOVE! Program is not stated. 3rd sentence: ‘dissemination’ does not have a clear referent and is not described. The role of NCP is not clearly described. It is not clear that stating the number of patient visits [patient-level data] is useful information, since the last sentence focuses on the MOVE! program at the facility level. How ‘implementation’ of the program was measured is not described.

3. 3rd paragraph: The statement of objective does not clearly follow from the previous paragraphs; the objective also needs some clarification. The reason[s] for selecting organizational factors as variables and the measurement of ‘implementation’ both need to be explained.

Methods

1st paragraph: The choice of mixed methods design needs explanation: data from this approach that could not otherwise be collected; significance of the data for analysis; description of those data that were best collected by quantitative methods and those that were best collected by qualitative methods; overall rationale for mixed methods. ‘Implementation’ must be defined here so that the reader will understand what was measured and the rationale for its measurement. It’s confusing to read in the previous section and this paragraph that implementation is based on the percentage of eligible Veterans enrolled in
MOVE!, and then to read that the number of enrollments ‘reflects the extent’ of implementation. It’s also unclear here what enrollment means, although that is discussed later.

2nd paragraph [sample selection]: Selection criteria as well as the rationale for maximum variation among sites should be stated. The rationale for the interviews should have been provided in the previous paragraph, I think, but, if not, it should be given here. The sampling technique is important only insofar as it identified staff to be interviewed. In this paragraph, ‘degree of implementation’ is used without definition.

3rd paragraph [data collection procedures]: Please clarify which staff were invited to participate and consider briefly describing how they were contacted, if verbal consent was obtained and whether information about their position was also collected.

Quantitative and Qualitative data paragraphs

Since this is a mixed methods study, I think these paragraphs could be merged into one section which would more clearly explain the actual use of mixed methods. For example, the five domains could be listed, along with a brief explanation of how and why they were adapted for use in this study. If the closed-ended questions were adapted, please explain that process as well. The discussion of the model and the relationships between and among the various factors would fit better in the results and discussion section.

I have similar comments about the open-ended questions: how they were developed and tested; criteria used for their selection from a comprehensive list. A statement of the areas to be explored with these questions would be helpful.

It is also important to describe the criteria for the interviewers for the open-ended questions: experience in research and, particularly, implementation research. If the interviewers were provided information about the MOVE! program, that information should be briefly described, as well as the criteria used to decide when additional details would be sought from respondents. The statement about understanding organizational context and implementation process is an analytic issue more than a data-gathering issue and could be further discussed later in the manuscript.

Data analysis

Organizational factors data: It seems that these data were analyzed by domain within each site and across sites – but that should be clearly stated. Besides the comparisons of high v. low sites, if data from other sites were also analyzed, that should be stated; if not, give the rationale for no analysis of that data.

For the interview data, the rationale for content analysis should be briefly presented. Then the development of codes should be described; if the codes were linked to the organizational factors, the links (or categories) should also be described. Were the respondents considered ‘equals?’ In other words, was the
data analyzed by provider type or profession or place in the hierarchy of the facility? Who were the analysts and what were the criteria for their selection? Who was involved in the consensus process? Please define the term ‘critical analysis.’ Was there an outline for the interview summary? How was it developed and who was involved? Were the interviewers involved in the analysis process? If so, what was the rationale? If not, what was the rationale? For the discussion by the team [of six analysts], what were the criteria for the discussion? Did they discuss only one summary at a time or more than one? How were the case summaries developed: who involved; criteria for content. What were the criteria for comparative analyses [between and among sites – please clarify] and who wrote them [or was the main author]. Same questions apply for the syntheses.

Minor Essential Revisions: Principal investigator (not principle)

Discretionary Revisions

Results

I think the data could be presented by site and by the organizational factors or, perhaps, by components of the MOVE! program, and incorporate quantitative and qualitative data. As it is, the presentation seems choppy for the sites, with the role of individuals seeming more important than it was [at least as I understood the analysis section].

The qualitative data section seems lengthy and unfocused. First, it’s not clear from the background and methods sections why regional staff is included in this analysis. Second, although the qualitative data are presented by organizational factor, these data could have more impact if they 1) provided nuance and 2) elucidated the relationships in the model that was presented earlier in the manuscript. [Or the model could be presented here to provide a context for the results.]

Management support: The paragraphs about a) transition site and b) physician champions seem to stand alone more than to describe something interesting or important about this domain.

Implementation climate: A definition would be helpful or, since the terms barriers and facilitators have been used previously in the manuscript, they could be used here. This section can be tightened considerably and the last two paragraphs can be used to present nuances.

Communications: This sub-section begins with a discussion that includes referrals and undefined ‘communications, so it’s hard to figure out what the main point will be. In the second paragraph, MOVE! staffing is described, which probably belongs in the background section.

Discussion

This section can also be strengthened by more direct statements and by linking the discussion to the findings. In the first paragraph, for example, emphasizing
the quantitative results only discounts the importance of the qualitative results. Although the last sentence of this paragraph mentions dissemination, it doesn’t appear that there was sufficient data about dissemination in this project unless it was collected and not reported in this manuscript.

2nd paragraph: There’s important data here, so I suggest a focus on the findings at high implementation sites – from more general findings to specific ones.

3rd paragraph: 1st sentence doesn’t add much and the next-to-the last sentence is vague.

4th paragraph: The first part of this paragraph needs a clear focus. Also, by mid-paragraph, the statement that concludes that referral to a community program means low importance on MOVE! doesn’t seem to be based on the data presented in this manuscript. There may have been other barriers; at least a referral was made to a weight-loss program, rather than nothing done.

5th paragraph: This paragraph can be shortened and focused on the issues of team development. The contrast between teams at high-performing and low-performing sites can easily be made.

6th paragraph [study limitations]: In sentence four, I suggest using the phrase, ‘purposive sample design was selected’ to maximize variation. Then say that you expected to identify differences and commonalities [or whatever words seem appropriate] within domains and across sites. Then you can continue on to your second point, so long as you briefly define ‘administrative data’ for your non-VA readers. The reasons you revised the assignment of sites to categories need to be revised so that they are clear and understandable. Finally, it’s appropriate to state that the data for these analyses were collected [some] months following dissemination [however it was done] of the MOVE! program.

Conclusions

I think the recommendations need to be clearly stated, as well as to whom they’re directed. The abstract presents them much more clearly.

**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.