Reviewer’s report

Title: Challenges in identifying barriers to adoption in a theory-based implementation study: lessons for future implementation studies

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Reviewer: Yvonne Forsell

Reviewer’s report:

This is an interesting paper on challenges in identifying barriers to adoption in a theory-based implementation study. The aim is to describe and identify the process of identifying key factors influencing health professionals’ referrals of woman diagnosed with mild to moderate postnatal depression. This is an important topic and there is a need for new approaches.

The editor has already passed comments to the authors, which they have answered taken into account according to “Author’s response to reviews”. Thus it seems that the authors’ intention is now to focus more on challenges in implementation research, especially the need for different approaches.

However, the focus of the paper still seems very much to be on identifying the barriers rather than the challenges of identifying them, e.g. abstract result second sentence. The third sentence seems to be more appropriate for the aim of the study.

Another example is the end of the introduction. The result section is also more focused on the identification of the barriers.

Additionally the result section is clearly focused on identifying barriers more than challenges.

An important result regarding challenges is the low respondent rate. A description of the procedure is provided in the discussion section. It seems more appropriate to have this in the method section. How much did the reminders affect the respondent rate?

Another conclusion drawn by the author is that the clinical topic per se hindered recruitment. Is this supported by the data? Are there ways to overcome this?

In summary the paper needs to be clearer, what is the main focus? What are the main results? What are the recommendations for further studies?

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:

I declare I have no competing interests