Reviewer’s report

Title: Evaluation of a tailored, multi-component intervention for implementation of evidence-based clinical practice guidelines in primary care physical therapy: a non-randomized controlled study

Version: 1 Date: 29 August 2013

Reviewer: Henna Hasson

Reviewer’s report:

Comments to the authors

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. My major concern deals with the aim and study design of the paper. Currently the aim is stated as: "... to evaluate the effectiveness of this implementation intervention on process outcomes." This aim implies that different implementation strategies are compared (for example comparing the current implementation approach with printed materials only). However, from the method section it seems that this is more of an intervention study i.e. the intervention group receives the guidelines which are not distributed to the control group. In fact, in the method section on p 4 it is stated that "...the effectiveness of the intervention was evaluated" (the first paragraph). An implementation study would imply a stronger design for instance a comparison of two (or more) active strategies to implement the guidelines. Please, reformulated the aim and describe the study design/methods in accordance to that.

2. Please provide more information about how the controls were expected to work. It is stated that they continued to provide care "according to individual knowledge and experience". Is it only individual knowledge or are there any other guidelines available? From what sources is this group expected to get/build their knowledge? Are there any national or regional guidelines or steering documents? If there are no guidelines available, it seems that the questionnaire items concerning guideline knowledge etc are not relevant for this group. Please clarify this issue and motivate the use of these questionnaire items for the controls.

Minor Essential Revisions

Introduction:

3. The sentence "Important determinants of guideline use were identified." seems unnecessary. It is suggested that the authors either continue by giving examples of the determinants or omit this sentence since it in it’s current form doesn’t add anything to the introduction.

4. It is suggested that the second paragraph is shortened or omitted since it’s value to the paper is limited.

5. It is stated that no prior study has investigated the implementation of
guidelines in primary care physical therapy in Scandinavia. The limitation to Scandinavian seems strange. Please, motivate why Scandinavian studies are different than others or omit this specific part.

6. The term process outcome is used. It is suggested that the term "implementation outcomes" is used since it is more established what comes to implementation research. The article otherwise deals with implementation terminology.

7. The description of regional development could be moved to the method section.

Discussion

8. The discussion part could be sharpened. Currently this part is lengthy and little unstructured. For instance it is unclear what the Discussion of findings from a general perspective contributes. This part could be combined with the other parts of the discussions.

9. Second paragraph: Please clarify that the results of significant changes in three of the four primary outcomes concerned the intervention group.

10. It is stated that "The proportion of PTs who reported frequent use of guidelines increased by 9% in the intervention group while remaining unchanged in the control group." This finding needs more discussion and analysis than stating that this is common in prior studies. The notion that implementation seminar attendance had significant contribution to the use of the guidelines also needs more thorough discussion.

11. A long part of the discussion section deals with possible explanations of the results. It is suggested that this part is shortened. Instead a thorough discussion about what these findings have for implications to practical care, implementation and intervention research could be discussed. In addition, the need for future research could be highlighted.

Limitations

12. The most important limitation seems to be the study design i.e. comparing an intervention rather than comparing different implementations strategies. This should be discussed.

**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 that I have no competing interests' below.