Author's response to reviews

Title: The development of a theory-based intervention to promote appropriate disclosure of a diagnosis of dementia

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Dear Editor

We are pleased that the reviewer recognised the extent to which we addressed his previous suggestions. We also welcome the opportunity to respond further to his point below.

"The main point I made concerned the authors' reporting of 'step 5', which I think needs some clarification. What is this "consensus approach"? How was it reached? Which techniques are discarded and what thresholds are used? Are we sure that graded tasks influence self-efficacy alone or might they influence other variables?"

We agree that the consensus approach outlined in Step 5 could be more clearly described. We actually should have described two different consensus processes. The first was that used by a collaboration of psychologists and implementation researchers to map different change techniques onto different variables targeted by implementation activities (now referenced by a paper in press, Michie et al). This provides a decision-support tool based on both evidence and judgement. The second consensus approach involved the authors using this tool to inform the selection of behaviour change techniques to target the variables selected for change in the previous step. We have therefore attempted to clarify the description of the latter by stating that our own deliberations were structured by the use of this tool.

This tool suggested a number of behaviour change techniques that would be the likely best bets for application to the variables targeted for change. The main issue that subsequently influenced their selection was feasibility. Therefore, under Step 7 we illustrate how one technique (motivational interviewing) was not selected to change self-efficacy. We do not believe that providing a
comprehensive list of all discarded techniques would be immediately helpful for readers of this paper but the full framework is available through Michie et al (in press).

We have addressed the final question (Are we sure that graded tasks influence self-efficacy alone or might they influence other variables?) in the discussion as follows:

For the subsequent modelling experiment, more than one behaviour change technique was used to target each of the three behaviours. Hence, we cannot be certain whether any effect on a given variable could directly attributable to a given technique, e.g. whether graded tasks would influence only self-efficacy or whether self-efficacy would be influenced by only graded tasks. We had considered an experimental design whereby participants would be randomly allocated to different techniques for each of the three behaviours and discarded this on the grounds that the study would have insufficient power to detect such effects.

We hope that our changes respond sufficiently to the concerns raised by the reviewer.

Yours sincerely
Robbie Foy