Author's response to reviews

Title: Exposing the key functions of a complex intervention for shared care in mental health: case study of a process evaluation

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Dr Graham

Thank you for your letter regarding the above manuscript. We were pleased with the positive comments from the reviewers and are grateful for their constructive and consistent critique. I attach a revised version of the manuscript with track changes and line numbers as well as a version without track changes. I also attach a PDF of reference 19 as requested. The original RCT did not have a trial number as such; it was funded by the National Primary Secondary Interface R&D Programme and carried out at a time when pragmatic health services research trials were not always registered. I will detail the changes made to the manuscript in response to the 3 referees:

Susan Michie’s comments. Firstly we have extended the detail of the method, particularly with respect to understanding interactions utilising the Realistic Evaluation approach and defining essential (core) functions (pp10-11). It now stands alone. In the discussion we have outlined the previous critique in reference 19, further clarified the specific attributes of Realistic Evaluation and described the innovative elements (p21-22). You can see that the results section of reference 19, focuses mainly on a description of the primary case study construction and covers only one aspect of the intervention in the cross case analysis.

We have removed the second set of contextual factors in Figure 1, which was meant as a repetition rather than something different. The abstract has been substantially rewritten. A new title has been chosen, as above. An even shorter title – ‘Exposing the essential functions of a complex intervention for shared care in mental health’ - could be used if you prefer, although we believe the longer title is more informative.

Amendments related to Christopher Dowrick’s report. We agree that the paper is essentially about the first aim as listed in the original abstract. We have therefore removed the second aim as the evidence does not substantiate the benefit of using the realistic evaluation approach.
In response to the third reviewer Bronagh Blackwood: We have amended the title and added clarity to the methods section, as well as modifying the abstract (p2-3); summarising the previous critique ensures the paper stands alone. We have also clarified how this paper adds to the previous publications which focused on method rather than results (p9).

Figure one has been modified as has the text in relation to it (p8). We have added to the critique an explanation of why the patients’ voice is absent in this particular evaluation (p21). More detail has been provided about how the CMO configurations linked to the inductive analysis. (p 10-11) Further detail has been given about the generation of catalysing, doing and reviewing as key change management functions. (p11). We have clarified the reference to Figure 1 (p10) and how Figure 2 relates to a new way of thinking about how complex interventions can be examined (p23).

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future,

Yours sincerely,

Dr Richard Byng