Author's response to reviews

Title: Studying policy implementation using a macro, meso and micro frame analysis: the case of the Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research & Care (CLAHRC) programme nationally and in North West London.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Editors
Health Research Policy and Systems
Re: 8348990997147986

30 September 2012

Dear Editors and Reviewers:

Thank you for the very helpful second set of peer review comments received on August 27, 2012 for the paper submitted as The Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC) as a Policy Response to the “second translational gap” and its implementation as a programme in North West London”. Both authors have discussed the reviewers’ comments and our responses are below and are incorporated into the accompanying revised manuscript.

The comments form Michael Hill did not require any further changes.

Graeme Currrie’s proposed compulsory (1 and 2) and minor revisions (3-7) are addressed below.

1. **Could you elaborate more on your conceptual framework (Goffman's frame analysis) and bring in back in when discussing data. This will enable you to make theoretical generalisations that might be applicable to other translational initiatives.**

2. **The conclusion is weak. Please elaborate upon practical and policy implications, and make clear how you contribute to literature. Finally, suggest future research.**

For the compulsory revisions we have chosen to tackle these two suggestions in one. The utility of a frame analysis for studying the implementation of policy – in this case that of a programme to address the second translational gap – is expanded upon in the conclusion. Specifically the point is made that the chosen analytical framework has potential for a wide range of policy implementation analyses, and that it is particularly useful when exploring the transition from idea/ concept to strategy to programme in practice as a policy is implemented. In particular, where a policy is being implemented across multiple sites, using a frame analysis to assess the continuity from the idea to the macro-level policy can help tracing the degree to which the macro-level policy is pursued, or not, across sites at the local level.

3. **Tell the reader more about your embedded observations and analysis of this observational data.**

Details about the embedded observation and analysis of this data has been added to page 8, specifically, the importance of listening and being part of the day-to-day conversations and narratives of the North West London CLAHRC for understanding how they understood their mandate and objectives according to their understanding of the purpose of the larger CLAHRC programme.
4. Page 2, 'other studies are tackling this' - provide citations. Also note other studies (external evaluations funded under NIHR SDO programme at least) are also examining process of translation, and not evaluating outcome (although CLAHRC internal evaluations might be doing this).

Citations added to page 2 regarding other studies and evaluations. An additional note was added to ensure clarity that this is a study of the implementation of a knowledge translation programme, and not a study or evaluation of the effectiveness of the CLAHRC model for encouraging knowledge translation.

5. Page 15, you state that CLAHRCs may be a manifestation of the KT gap without explaining what is a 'big' statement. Also don't understand why this is 'ironic'.

On page 15 the statement about whether the CLAHRCs themselves could have been a manifestation of a translational gap (for example if the initial policy idea had changed significantly during the development of the programme guidance) has been removed and the idea behind it included as part of the expanded conclusion

6. I am still not comfortable with your mentions of image and identity, given this is not elaborated theoretically or empirically. Maybe just use more intuitive labelling of mission/role?

The terms image and identity have been replaced, where it made sense, with the suggested more intuitive labelling of mission and or role.

7. In describing your data analysis, you mention a ‘table’ of codes. Could you include this in manuscript as a way of seeing how you derived your storyline, and to give us a sense of the wider data set.

Additional details about the data coding and analysis has been added to the methods section. The following labels were used for analysis of both the interviews and documents: aim; objective; values; goals; vision; method; purpose; scope; step-change; partnership; team; drivers; funding; evaluation. This is now described in the Methods section starting on page five.

Finally, a new title has been proposed for the paper to elucidate the policy implementation focus. We would also like to acknowledge the final note made my Michael Hill and thank him for his comments and time.

Sincerely,
Sarah Caldwell and Nicholas Mays