Author's response to reviews

Title: Advancing the application of systems thinking in health: South African examples of a leadership of sensemaking for PHC

Authors:

Lucy Gilson (lucy.gilson@uct.ac.za)
Soraya Elloker (soraya.elloker@capetown.gov.za)
Patti Olckers (Patti.olckers@westerncape.gov.za)
Uta Lehmann (ulehmann@uwc.ac.za)

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Advancing the application of systems thinking in health: South African examples of a leadership of sensemaking for PHC_MS, No. 8408497811809421

Thank you for the opportunity to revise and re-submit the above paper. Both reviewers were positive about the paper, and except for one point, only proposed minor discretionary revisions. Their comments were all helpful.

Maria Stuttaford specifically asked for one particular revision – to be more explicit about how sensemaking and discretionary power work together in the discussion section. As this is a running theme throughout the paper, from the conceptual framework, through the findings and into the discussion section, we have sought to tighten and strengthen the argument on this point across the paper, rather than only in one section. So we have made edits across the paper, including considerable revisions in the discussion section, in order to address this point – as highlighted in yellow.

Both Maria Stuttaford (MS) and Bruno Marchal (BM) suggested a number of other discretionary revisions, and we have accepted the vast majority of these points. However, there were three we felt were not necessary to address:

MS: point 3, add a quote from policy – we did not feel this was essential in this quite introductory paragraph.

MS: point 8, plans for future work? We already note that we will continue to work together and track developments, but the specific areas of work will evolve through collaboration and over time rather than being specifically pre-planned. We do not feel that this paper is the right place in which to offer a broader reflection on the DIALHLS project as a whole.

BM: short intro to the PHC reengineering policy – this particular policy is not currently relevant to the specific location in which we are working.

We hope that the revisions made will be acceptable. Thanks for considering this paper.

Your sincerely,

[Signature]

Lucy Gilson, for the authors