Author's response to reviews

Title: Innovations in mental health services implementation: A report on state-level data from the National Evidence-Based Practices Project

Authors:

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Version: 2 Date: 19 January 2006

Author's response to reviews: see over
January 18, 2005

To: Editors-In-Chief and Reviewers of Implementation Science
From: Jennifer L. Magnabosco, Ph.D.

Re: Response to Reviewer Comments for manuscript #492692853867122,
“Innovations in mental health services implementation: A report on state-level data from the National Evidence-Based Practices Project”

Thank you for reviewing my manuscript, “Innovations in mental health services implementation: A report on state-level data from the National Evidence-Based Practices Project”. Both reviews provided very helpful comments for improvements and revisions. What follows is a description of changes made to address suggestions made by reviewers for both Major Compulsory and Minor Essential Revisions.

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS

REVIEWER 1

- “Re-write paper as an exploration of state-level implementation strategies/activities; subdividing each step as an innovation introduced an unnecessary and unhelpful level of complexity”: While the study reported here is definitely a study of state-level implementation activities and strategies, its goal was to report on what’s new or innovative. The Methods section now clarifies how the definition of innovation was used to count the state-level implementation activities and strategies as such. This author can only partially agree with the reviewer that the “EBPS are the innovation in this study”. While it is true that the EBPS are innovative interventions, it is also true that many new activities and strategies were developed and used to implement the EBPs. The revised manuscript clarifies points raised by this reviewer as described here.
- “The qualitative methods sections is inadequately described”: This section has been rewritten and expanded to provide complete information on data sources, sample and data analysis.
  - Since this section has been expanded, concern about “reliance on an unpublished paper for the methods” has been addressed.
  - Text was added to describe the “the number of interviews undertaken in total” in each state, and number of one-to-one and group interviews.
  - “Timing of the interviews related to the timescale for the implementation of the EBPs” was also described in new text.
  - The description of the content analysis methods used were expanded.
  - The description of data sources—site visit reports and background information—was also expanded. No original transcripts were used as site visit reports were based on site visit notes, background material on states and site visit debriefing notes.

- “There is no attempt to draw even qualitatively out those strategies/activities deemed by interviewees to be more or less useful. Finally given the potential benefit of this paper would be to describe a range of implementation strategies/activities at state-level, more description of what
falls within each category is needed”: This author feels that one of the next steps that can result from this initial study is to do a follow up analysis of which activities and strategies have been most or least useful. The study reported used data from only two points in time, and not a point in time that was near to completion of EBP implementation. Similarly, the goal of the study was to report on what was new, not to present a comparative list of those strategies which might or might not be considered innovative. However, such a comparison would be useful, and would also require primary data collection methods to study each state in more depth, which was beyond the scope of the study reported.

The secondary data used in this study—the site visit reports—were syntheses of background information and site visit notes. Consequently they did not allow for systematic study of what interviewees thought most or least useful or successful. However, this study showed that the site visit reports could be used to determine whether activities and strategies were new and/or specifically developed, implemented or planned to implement the Project’s EBPs. Site visit reports were validated by the state to this effect. To address the reviewer’s concerns here, a few comments have been made in the Discussion and Conclusion sections to describe the need for more analyses and to remind the reader that this is a first report on this topic.

**REVIEWER 2**

- “Shorten length of paper”: The overall length of the paper has been shortened, even with the more detail added to the Methods section as suggested by both reviewers.

- “Shorten sections of the paper”: The “foundation” section in the Background has been shortened overall; “evaluations in government” bullet points have been decreased to two, with citations listing the remaining examples as suggested.

- “Revise the Results section”: This section has been revised and shortened, with special attention paid to decreasing redundancies between Tables and text.
  - The original Table 2 has been eliminated and aggregate results have been reported in the text instead.
  - The original Table 3 has been included and text has been revised to be shorter and more meaningful.
  - Original Table 7 is now Table 4 on rank ordering. Text on rank ordering in the Discussion section was moved to the Results section and initial mention of this method now appears in the Methods section, as suggested. There is now a better balance between text and the Table.
  - Original Table 4-6 are now labeled as Appendices 1-3 as suggested. They are referred to in the text as necessary.
  - Since the original Table 2 (now not included in manuscript) is not included in revisions, there was not need to mention that “total number of innovations for each EBP is affected by unequal distribution of the number of states implementing each practice”. However, this point is mentioned in the Discussion section’s description of limitations.

- “Clarify application of Greenhalgh’s definition of innovations”: The Methods section now contains a more explicit description of the Methods in general, including how Greenhalgh’s definition was applied. The Methods section also clarifies that implementation activities counted were only those considered innovative. No non-innovative implementation activities were counted for the final reported analysis.
• “Address the implication that the study assessed the effectiveness or success of implementation”: This author did not intend to imply that one of the study’s goals was to assess effectiveness or success of the activities and strategies discussed. This study is a first report of such activities; secondary data was assessed at only two cross-sectional points. Therefore, any text that implies that effectiveness or success was formally assessed in this paper was eliminated. However, discussion does include a few points about the need to further explore which “types or combinations of activities are most effective with regard to successful implementation” as the reviewer suggests.

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS

REVIEWER 1

• None

REVIEWER 2

• “Switching of Tables 2 and 3” in the text has been corrected.
• Capitalization of “EBPS” (instead of “EBPs”) has been corrected where needed.

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

REVIEWER 1

• None

REVIEWER 2

• “Clarify sentence on (original) p. 9 about members of the team having expertise in various knowledge areas”: Clarifications were made and now appear on page X.

• “Revise description of study as “combined retrospective and prospective cross-sectional and comparative investigation”: Revisions were made in the Methods section and in the Abstract, eliminating original language and clarifying the fact that the method and data used were secondary data and analysis.

• Shorten “EBP Project EBP” terms where possible, and edit one research question on original page 4 to, “Can innovations in EBP Project Implementation be identified from activities…and plan for EBP sustainability?”: Revisions were made to address both suggestions.