Reviewer's report

Title: A conceptual framework for implementation fidelity

Version: 3 Date: 11 September 2007

Reviewer: Jill Francis

Reviewer's report:

General

I have read the revised manuscript with great interest and I think the argument is strong, clear and convincing. I believe that the reader, coming to the idea of implementation fidelity of the first time, would gain from this paper an understanding of the importance of this type of measurement not just as an ‘optional extra’ when evaluating interventions, but as a core aspect of methodology without which we cannot understand or optimise interventions. I congratulate the authors on a fine contribution to the literature that will advance this field and I suspect this paper will be cited many times by researchers who wish to conduct high-quality evaluations of interventions.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. The three subsections of the Abstract feel rather repetitive and I wonder whether it is possible to structure the content more effectively.

2. On the top line of Page 4, at “such possible explanations”, I am not clear which explanations are referred to.

3. Page 5 and elsewhere: Font of superscript numbers changes occasionally.

4. Page 8: There are two dots at the end of the last sentence.

5. Page 9: At “The measurement of implementation fidelity is the measurement of adherence”, it may improve clarity to mention who is adhering (or not), i.e., “adherence by the deliverer of the intervention”.

6. References 15 and 23 (Pages 25-6) are incomplete.
What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.