Reviewer’s report

Title: Site-Diagnosis and the Use of Multidisciplinary Teams of Local Clinicians and Clinical Experts: A QUERI-Related Process for Developing Implementation Interventions

Version: Date: 2 February 2007

Reviewer: Martin Eccles

Reviewer’s report:

General
These are combined comments from series Editors Martin Eccles and Ian Graham.
This is an interesting article that tackles an important topic.
We are sorry for the delay in getting back to you but, in order to deal with the series of articles as a whole the pace has been dictated by the getting the last reviews of the series.

General comments for authors of all articles
1] Please remember that you are writing for an international audience. In some cases it seems the papers make comments that seem directed at the VHA and these should be deleted - you need to be thinking much more globally and presenting lessons learned and perhaps recommendations for how best to do implementation research regardless of what your own system is like. The DETAIL of VHA structures and funding are of no interest to an international audience. If you wish to make reference to funding it should only appear in the acknowledgements section and not in the body of the text.
2] Related to [1], all articles have a plethora of abbreviations, many of which relate to VHA specific structures functions or procedures. In general these should be described in generic terms and the number of abbreviations kept to a minimum.
3] You need to be clear about who will be the main audience for both these and the rest of the papers- if it is seasoned implementation researchers then sometimes the information seems rather simplistic; if it novel implementation researchers/facilitators then sometimes more clarity is needed- either way the papers need a more similar pitch to the intended audience. We think that the readership is the interested implementation researcher or policy maker.
4] You should use a standard description of the QUERI process both in the text and Table. However, the Journal web system will not retain the formatting so I will send you the preferred version as a separate email attachment. Ideally, this should be introduced early on in the article and then referred to as appropriate throughout.

Overall could you ensure that the article conforms to the journal style as specified in the instructions for authors (http://www.implementationscience.com/info/instructions/default.asp).

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
Both reviewers felt that the paper could be written more concisely; I agree.
There are a number of initial comments to help with this.
You should make the focus of the paper the process and content of intervention development only. You should not mention articles as yet unwritten.
You should delete the detailed description of QUERI as this will be covered in initial article(s) which you should reference (as above).
You should delete the section describing the activities of the MH QUERI Centre as this detracts from the focus of the paper.
You should not refer to the QUERI series of articles – once we have a clear idea of what is to be included we will do this as necessary.
You should delete the sections describing the funding dimensions of the project as these will not be intelligible or of interest to an international readership.
As your focus is intervention development I suggest that you detail the context (SUDS) once only and then do not use the acronym again.
Stylistically, the article is difficult to follow, so it would be helpful if you could:
Early on frame the article according to the steps of the QUERI six step framework – it seems that you are working in steps 3 and 4 and drawing on 2.
Make greater use of sub-headings identifying the various sub-steps that you went through.
Specific comments

I think you could reverse the order of the title of the paper so that the reader understands that this is about intervention development.

As one of the reviewers points out the paper would be enriched enormously by linking your description of your process to the example of the intervention that you ended up delivering. It seems you might get close to this in Table 2 but I am not clear exactly what intervention was delivered. Even if you had to do this in rather general terms it would be most useful for the reader. If you choose to use Table 2 as the vehicle for this you should then refer to it and its sub-sections throughout the text.

You talk, in the abstract, of the theoretical grounding of what you do but do not really address this further beyond describing a number of frameworks that address intervention development. It is without doubt true that there is little consensus about the use of terms such as theoretical grounding, theory based, theory inspired etc. However, if you were able to say a little more about the link between theory and your work it would be of considerable interest to readers. For instance, if you were measuring constructs dictated by a particular theory it would be interesting to know what they were.

You use the term “Development evaluation” to describe what you did. Given that what you seem to be describing is what might, in other parlance, be described as identifying barriers and facilitators and developing a multi-faceted tailored intervention – then I don’t find the term informative – as you correctly identify you give a detailed description of the steps but you did not conduct an evaluation. Could you come up with a more informative term?

I would like more on the roles of the Principal Investigator. P11 talks briefly about info gather and info giver which fits with the them of implementation researcher (researcher vs consultant-facilitators)- p15 also talks a little about researchers as change agent - page 18 talks about external facilitation—can you say more about the problems caused by experiencing the two roles. Making sure that you clearly describe the actual role of the PI in the process of developing the intervention throughout would be helpful.

More discussion about the observations - how to they come to conclusions about norms and culture and social networks- i.e. what is the method for identifying culture?

Data on whether the intervention worked or not would add another layer on interest.

The discussion needs tightening up and the conclusion needs to be re-written completely.

P28- table 1- what does (citation list) mean in the 2nd column last row?

Several of the references are incomplete or incorrectly cited.

Referee Michie says “Another issue that should be addressed is the context and generalisability of the intervention. The country and specific circumstances in which the intervention has been developed is not described (although addresses of the authors suggest it was the USA). What aspects of this intervention are likely to be relevant to other developed and developing countries? What is new about this intervention? What are the “main messages” of this article?” Given that the purpose of the article is mainly about the process I am happy for you not to deal with this point. Similarly for the comment beginning “The article states that data about implementation, adoption and sustainability will be presented in future.”

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.