Author's response to reviews

Title: QUERI Series: A Social Marketing Approach to Implementing Evidence-based Practice: The TIDES Depression Collaborative Care Model

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Response to Reviewers

Reviewer 1 (L Nemeth)

General
Paragraph 2
The reviewer’s major request in this paragraph is that the paper’s social marketing examples be tailored to depression specifically rather than just conceptually. This is a very useful suggestion that we have complied with, as described below in our below response to Major Compulsory Revision 1.

Paragraph 3
As requested, the examples in Table 3 now refer to depression care.

Major Compulsory Revisions
Comment 1
The text of the manuscript, as well as the marketing messages in Tables 3 and 4 (formerly Tables 2 and 3), now refer to depression care rather than to smoking cessation. These changes contextualize more specifically how social marketing can be applied to the depression collaborative care program illustrated in Figure 1.

Comment 2
We agree that competing agendas for improvement at the local level are an important challenge to implementation of any evidence-based intervention. We address this in the first paragraph of the section describing TIDES marketing to facility managers, but have highlighted the issue by adding the following paragraph to that section:

“The systematic TIDES marketing effort helps to differentiate TIDES from competing priorities for improvement at the facility level. For example: TIDES provides written and computerized tools for facilities to implement; depression care managers may be centralized at the VISN level to minimize the demands on local facility staffing; and peer managers at other facilities are available for consultation about the challenges and benefits of implementing TIDES.”

Comment 3
Please see below response to Reviewer 2, Major Compulsory Revisions Paragraph 10.

Minor Essential Revisions
Comment 1
We appreciate the reviewer’s suggestion to shorten the description of the VHA infrastructure, particularly for an international audience. However, we found most of our descriptions of the VHA difficult to shorten because they relate to specific TIDES marketing activities. We did shorten the description of VHA in the 2nd paragraph of the Introduction, as well as details about the Mental Health QUERI in the final section of the Introduction.
Additionally, as described in our response to Reviewer 2, Major Compulsory Revisions Paragraph 7, we were able to eliminate several redundant statements about TIDES marketing when we rearranged some sections of the manuscript. We believe this rearrangement also clarifies our description of the application of social marketing within VHA.

Comment 2
Given the paper’s length and complexity, we are reluctant to add more detail about the TIDES National Dissemination Package materials, which are rather voluminous. Would it be possible to include some example items from this package in an online Appendix, or add a note that interested readers could obtain these materials by contacting the Mental Health QUERI?

Discretionary Revisions
Comment 1
Adding “QUERI Series” to the title (see Reviewer 2, General Comment 4) allowed the title to be significantly shortened to “A Social Marketing Approach to Implementing Evidence-based Practice: The TIDES Depression Collaborative Care Model.”
Reviewer 2 (M Eccles & I Graham)

General
Comment 1
As described in our above response to Reviewer 1, Minor Essential Revisions Comment 1, we have endeavored to remove detail about VHA structures that is not directly related to specific TIDES marketing activities.

Comment 2
We have attempted to remove acronyms where possible, such as references to the MH-QUERI DSG, ReTIDES, the TIDES NDP, and VISN CMOs and COSs.

Comment 3
Our paper targets 2 main audiences
- Health services researchers not familiar with social marketing
- Senior managers or policy makers who want to implement an evidence-based intervention and could use social marketing as a tool

Comment 4
The standard description of QUERI has been added, replacing the 4th paragraph of the Background section; the QUERI table was also added as Table 1. “QUERI Series” was inserted into the manuscript’s title.

Major Compulsory Revisions
Paragraph 1
As described in the paragraphs below, we have attempted to enhance the clarity and consistency of our description of TIDES marketing activities.

Paragraph 2
We have removed the 2 references to change resistance in VHA because they are tangential to the paper’s main themes.

Paragraph 3
The reviewer asks what empirical evidence can be cited regarding the efficacy/effectiveness of the social marketing approach. We have therefore added the following as the 4th paragraph of the section “Social Marketing: Applying Marketing Techniques to Social Problems:”

“Most published evaluations of health-related social marketing report on individual interventions or limited numbers of case studies (RWJF lessons from the field; Grier, ARPH). The Institute for Social Marketing has recently conducted a series of rigorous reviews of the available evidence regarding the effectiveness of social marketing for improving health (Gordon et al, 2006). They reviewed published reports of 88 interventions targeting diet, exercise, and substance abuse (including smoking). Interventions were included only if they met all of Andreasen’s 6 benchmarks for social marketing (Table 2). Although results could not be aggregated statistically due to the diversity of interventions, the authors conclude that social marketing can be effective, particularly for diet and substance abuse.”
Paragraph 4
As described above in the response to Reviewer 1, Major Compulsory Revision 1, the manuscript text and Tables 3 and 4 now refer to depression care rather than smoking cessation.

Paragraph 5
The paragraph describing the TIDES marketing team now provides an estimate of the number of persons who have served on it.

We have endeavored to clarify which TIDES marketing activities have been completed and which are ongoing. Specifically, we have added dates to the first paragraph that introduces the TIDES marketing plan and the paragraph that describes targeted marketing to audience segments. We have reviewed the manuscript in detail to ensure tenses are correct, and have clarified the 3 instances the Reviewer noted (pages 5, 12, and 14 of the original submission) as well as the relevant sentence in the Abstract. Further, as described in detail in our response to Paragraph 7 below, we believe that the rearrangement of several sections helps clarify the sequence of TIDES marketing activities.

Paragraph 6
The sequential behavioral change model portrayed in Figure 1 was developed by Les Robinson, an Australian consultant in social marketing. Mr. Robinson developed the model based on his professional experience and his research into voluntary behavior change by adults. Mr. Robinson's work is described in his website, http://www.enabling-change.com.au/, and his behavior change research is described in a white paper accessible on the site at http://www.enabling-change.com.au/Voluntary_change.pdf. We describe the sequential model in the paper because the QUERI marketing effort found it to be useful in organizing message development for multiple VHA audiences. In response to the reviewer’s comment, we have added to the manuscript a citation to the underlying research white paper in the sentence where the sequential process is first mentioned.

Paragraph 7
The Reviewer makes a very helpful suggestion to consolidate into a separate section the “activities and data” the TIDES team had available to plan its marketing efforts. We therefore rearranged the “Audience Research and Segmentation” section to fall within the description of the TIDES marketing plan, immediately prior to the section on Evidence-Based Quality Improvement. These 2 sections jointly describe the TIDES team’s published research, unpublished findings, and relevant experience that informed the marketing plan. We believe this rearrangement also accomplishes several other purposes: streamlining the social marketing section, eliminating some redundant statements about TIDES marketing, and clarifying the timeline of TIDES marketing activities.

Paragraph 8
Because Table 1 now describes the 4 phases of QUERI Step 4, and the immediately previous paragraph describing the implementation of TIDES now includes dates, this paragraph has been clarified as requested. It now reads:
“TIDES can therefore be described as being in Phase 3 of QUERI Step 4 (see Table 1). However, short-term (6 month) and longer-term (18 month) outcomes assessments, usually associated with QUERI Steps 5 and 6, have been conducted for the first-generation TIDES sites. Formative evaluation activities {Stetler, 2006}, such as a systematic program of stakeholder interviews and measurement of program penetration and utilization, are ongoing. ”

Paragraph 9
The noted misspelling has been corrected.

Paragraph 10
As requested, we have revised the Evaluation section to include a list of specific marketing-related evaluation goals from the TIDES national dissemination effort and the current TIDES expansion (ReTIDES) project. We further state explicitly that it may, as the reviewer notes, be challenging to independently evaluate the contribution of the TIDES marketing effort to the overall effectiveness of the TIDES national dissemination effort.

The reviewer is correct that focused evaluation of the TIDES marketing activities is currently proposed rather than ongoing. We have clarified this in the revision.

The statement regarding generalizability of TIDES marketing strategies in the last sentence of the Discussion has been toned down as suggested.