Reviewer's report

Title: Using the theory of planned behaviour as a process evaluation tool in randomised trials of knowledge translation strategies: a case study from UK general practice

Version: 4 Date: 28 July 2010

Reviewer: Alison Hamilton

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions

1. While several revisions have been made that enhance the quality of this paper, I still have a significant concern with the characterization of the TBP questionnaire as a "process evaluation" in and of itself. Interestingly, the title refers to the TBP as a "process evaluation tool." This feels more comfortable to me, yet the paper itself never explicitly returns to this idea of the TBP as a tool (i.e., the word "tool" does not appear in the manuscript), and instead continually refers to the study as a process evaluation. The authors did clarify in the discussion that future studies may benefit from individual-level measures of behavior and from pre-intervention measures, but they do not explicitly state that their questionnaire represents only one component of what a comprehensive process evaluation should include. It concerns me greatly that readers who are naive to process evaluation will take away a message from this paper that if they do a post-intervention questionnaire, they will have done a process evaluation. The abstract clearly conveys this message, along with a disconcerting implication that process evaluations can elucidate causal mechanisms. It seems to me that there needs to be a clearer distinction made between what the TBP (as a "tool") enabled the authors to discover about their trial findings, versus what a process evaluation is intended to accomplish and how theory can enhance that endeavor.

Minor essential revisions

2. The additions to the manuscript (pages 15, 16, 17) need to be edited (punctuation errors, etc.).

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.