Author's response to reviews

Title: Conservation of Resources Theory and Research Use in Health Systems

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Dear Editor (s),

Below, please find a summary of the reviewers’ comments (in bold italics) and our response to each comment (regular text) and how any suggested changes have been incorporated into the revised manuscript.

Reviewer: Rebecca Armstrong [Minor essential revisions]

1. I think the background section needs a slightly enhanced definition of KT. I think it’s fine for people who have knowledge of KT but it makes a few leaps. I would suggest adding a sentence or two that describe more clearly the purpose and associated outcomes of KT. It might also be worth describing what KT looks like in practice.

An expanded definition of KT based on the CIHR definition found in the CIHR KT Strategy documentation (2004 – 2009) now appears on page 4. In this definition, KT is defined and framed in terms of the overall purpose, anticipated outcomes, and its practical application.

The methods sections needs just a little more clarity.
2. How many papers were obtained before you reached 100?
3. Presumably there was a range of different study types identified - were most of these descriptive? Please more clearly articulate your inclusion criteria.

The methods section on pages 9-10 of the revised manuscript includes an expanded description of the literature search strategy and inclusion criteria.

4. How were the cases selected? you have identified a set of criteria but how did you find the cases to match these?

The description of each case (page 11) now includes additional description that is in line with the criteria for case selection as presented on page 10.

5. You identify 57 potential participants. How did you find these names?

A list of individuals who were involved with each of the research projects described above was obtained from the principal investigator. Those who declined were asked to identify someone who may be more appropriate to contact. (See page 12).

6. Did the same interviewer conduct all of the interviews? Who was the interviewer?If not, would this have had any impact on your findings? probably not as you had an interview guide - but I am wondering if one interviewer was more skilled than another you might be able to get more sophisticated responses etc.

The interviews for case studies 1, 2, and 4 were conducted by the lead author. The interviews for case study 3 were conducted by a graduate research assistant who was trained and coached through a series
of mock interviews, subtleties of COR Theory, and was responsible for coding all interviews. Thus, the level of sophistication in conducting the interviews was comparable across the two interviewers. (See pages 12-13).

[Discretionary revisions]

1. It may be worth noting other theoretical approaches (e.g. diffusion of innovations) and then identifying how this approach differs, the strengths of explanation that it offers.

A much earlier version of our manuscript had an extensive review of alternative theoretical approaches. We felt that the addition of this content would greatly increase the length of the revised manuscript submission. We attempted to create a much shorter version of this content. In the end, however, we felt that this did not adequately represent the wealth of literature on diffusion of innovations, organizational change, and various KT models/frameworks -- a worthy topic for a paper on its own. Therefore, we have not added this content to the revised manuscript.

Reviewer: Francois Champagne [suggested discretionary revisions]

1. The last two objectives of the case study as described in the methods section to examine the function of resources and how resource constraints affect research use- do not correspond and should correspond to themes 2 and 3 as described in the interview guide and procedures section and with theme 2 and 3 of the results section.

The wording has been modified to reflect the three COR-KT themes.

2. Labeling of theme 2 in the interview guide and results section- Motivation to Conserve Resources- might be more appropriately relabeled as in the background presentation of CORT-threat of loss and protection of assets-

As per the reviewer’s suggestion, the wording of the three COR-KT themes is now consistent across the introduction/background (pages 7-8), description of the interview guide (pages 13-14), and results (pages 15, 20, and 22). The three COR-KT themes are worded as follows:

1. Resources are required for adaptation and change
2. The threat of loss leads to the protection of assets
3. Resources must be optimized for adaptation

3. Can data collected under theme 3 more convincingly show how resources must be optimized for successful research use?

We have provided additional interpretation of the findings to reflect the optimization of resources (pages 22-23).
We hope that our revised manuscript is satisfactory and look forward to your decision concerning its suitability for publication in *Implementation Science*.

Sincerely,

Celeste Alvaro, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor (Research)