Reviewer's report

Title: Dissemination: researchers should do what? A systematic review of conceptual planning frameworks.

Version: 1 Date: 18 January 2010

Reviewer: Vicky Ward

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions:

1. The background section needs to include more detail about the usefulness of identifying the theoretical basis for the frameworks you reviewed. At the moment, you presume that the reader will understand why this might be important, but it needs to be made clearer. To do this, you should draw on the literature which has already been published in this area. There are other calls for the appropriate theorisation of knowledge transfer and dissemination approaches such as that found in the work of Ward et al (JHSRP, 2009; BMC Health Services Research, 2009) and Graham, Tetroe et al (Jnl Cont Ed in Health Prof, 2006). These papers could prove particularly useful in evidencing a growing consensus about the need for organising frameworks.

2. In the methods section, you mention 'knowledge transfer' in addition to dissemination. The concepts of KT and dissemination are usually defined quite separately, and you have not made any distinction between them. KT is usually seen as the process of transferring research findings into clinical practice, whereas dissemination is the process of communicating research findings to an audience, which stops short of a particular outcome or use. Do you agree with this view, and, more importantly, how did you conceptualise the two terms for the purpose of your review?

3. The section of the results which focuses on funders is quite confusing. There are a number of Canadian and European funders which are included in table 2, which use specific guidance/frameworks, but these were not included in the results section in a clear way. Other information from the 4 key websites also seems to be missing from this section. Three of the sections seem to focus only on the papers reviewed and the final section only focuses on UK funders. It would also be better to arrange Table 2 in a way that fits with the results as they are presented in the text. As they are currently presented chronologically, I could not easily find the ESRC framework referenced in the text.

Minor essential revisions:

1. In the methods section, you should include detail about the search terms used for the review. This could be done in an accompanying box or table.

2. In the results section, you state that 'All encompass some or all of the five key attributes...'. Please clarify how many constitutes 'some'.

3. In the 'other identified frameworks' section there appears to be an error on line 8 - 'disseminating research results to nurses that involved via topic focused conferences'  

4. The second line of the fourth paragraph in the discussion appears to have a word missing - 'the nature and type guidance issued'  

5. The description of social marketing theory in table 1 needs to have more detail. There also appears to be a mistake in the second paragraph - I did not understand what you meant (i.e. social marketing dependent in depth market research)  

Discretionary revisions:  
1. In the results section, you describe how only one of the frameworks influenced by McGuire's persuasive communication matrix actually cites the original work. In order to see how you made a judgement about whether these frameworks were influenced by the matrix or not, you could include some details of the citation chain which links back to this original article.  

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field  

Quality of written English: Acceptable  

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

Declaration of competing interests:  
I declare that I have no competing interests