Reviewer's report

Title: A comparison of mental health policy and direct practice stakeholder perceptions of factors impacting evidence-based practice implementation

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Reviewer: Sarah Hetrick

Reviewer's report:

1. Major Compulsory Revisions
Not a great deal has been added to the field of knowledge by this study, except perhaps the use of a methodology that hasn’t commonly been used in this area. It probably will come as no surprise to any one working in this area that policy makers and practitioners have different views. While an interesting methodology, it does seem that a lot of the richness and depth that can come from focus group data was lost in what was an extremely complex methodology. The description of statements grouped by cluster contained a lot of potentially useful information about factors that one might need to consider when implementing EPB. The cluster names were somewhat meaningless in that if you only read these, you would not know what to target when trying to develop strategies for implementation. Additionally, each cluster contained both positive and negative statements, again making the cluster headings meaningless in terms of being able to use them to develop implementation strategies. Overall, this may mean the cluster map is invalid or at the very least not very helpful in terms of guiding practice. This study may be more suited as a short report unless the authors can a. make more of the meaning of the differences between the two groups they studies; and/or b. describe in more detail what each cluster means, with more analysis of the statements contained in each and a discussion of how an understanding of these clusters might facilitate implementation of EPB.

2. Minor Essential Revisions
here is a need to use consistent terminology throughout the transcript – e.g. facilitating/hindering, barriers/facilitators, facilitators/impediments; use/implementation of EPB.

3. Minor Essential Revisions
The conclusion statement in the abstract is unclear e.g. what are ‘cross system level approaches’ and how does this relate to the result of this study?

4. Major Compulsory Revisions
I think the aims of the study are not clearly articulated e.g. 1. At times the authors appear to be aiming to undertake a generalist study, that happens to be taking place in a youth mental health service; however, at times there are statements (for example in the background section of the abstract) that suggest this study is aiming to build the knowledge in the area of youth mental health. 2. The authors
state they want to examine perspectives toward EPB but in reality only report results that show views are different, rather providing detail about what the views are and how they are different. As the results are reported, the aim seems to be to ascertain if views are different or the same between policy makers and providers. In some ways they appear to seeking to establish factors that can generally be considered as barriers and facilitators (e.g. paragraph 4 of the background) and this is counter to much of the evidence that suggests barriers and facilitators unique to the organization where one is seeking to implement EPB need to be established 3. It is not clear what the authors mean when they refer to views about what ‘is important in EPB implementation’ – important in what regard? Important in terms of factors that need to be considered that may impede or facilitate implementation of EPB?

5. Major Compulsory Revisions
The background section suffers from the neglect of a whole body of work about implementation strategies based on rigorous RCT evidence. Authors state that ‘efforts to implement EBP should be guided by knowledge and experience’ and should add here that efforts should be guided by evidence and cite, for example, Cochrane review of implementation strategies. They also state in the third paragraph that very little is known about what factors inhibit or facilitate the adoption of evidence but again, we do have some evidence about what intervention strategies can facilitate the implementation of evidence. There have been several recent publications about barriers and facilitators to the implementation of EPB in youth mental health services in Australia.

6. Minor Essential Revisions
The meaning of several statements is unclear (perhaps due to the lack of clarity about the aims of this study). For example, it is unclear what point the authors are trying to make in the second paragraph of the background – that various factors influence whether EPB takes place? Is the point about consumers bringing their own view that these views/expectations/value etc…may or may not line up with what the evidence says? Is it (at the end of this paragraph) that the authors mean that ‘in order to predict what factors may be important to consider to ensure successful implementation….‘?

7. Minor Essential Revisions
It is interesting to read evidence from other disciplines in the backgound, but again, authors should be careful ensure they are adequately informed about the work done on barriers and facilitators in the health/mental health field. Authors should note that continuing education has not always stood up to rigorous evaluation as factor that facilitates EPB.

8. Minor Essential Revisions
The last paragraph in the background probably belongs in the methods section.

9. Minor Essential Revisions
The methods section would benefit from a more in-depth discussion of the
organizational context in terms of the health system generally, how this relates to
the health insurance scheme in this country, the agencies and the organization
structure of these agencies.

10. Minor Essential Revisions

In the methods section it is unclear what it means that people had ‘direct
experience with EPB’ – does this mean they know what it is, they practice EPB or
they have experience in implementing EPB?

11. Minor Essential Revisions

In the methods section, the paragraph describing characteristics of the sample
should be in the results section and it would be more interesting to read about
how the policy and practitioner group differed or were similar, given this is what
the aims of the study were.

12. Major Compulsory Revisions

In the methods section it is isn’t clear what the aims of the study are e.g. the
authors speak about understanding participants perspectives – but perspectives
of what?

13. Major Compulsory Revisions

In the methods section it , subsection ‘concept mapping’ there is a section that
appears to more clearly define what the aims of the study are beginning ‘The
research team then defined the purpose of the project…..’

14. Minor Essential Revisions

It is not clear what authors are referring to when they use the term ‘stakeholder
group’ – if it is that they mean the policy and the practitioner group then these are
the terms that should be used throughout.

15. Minor Essential Revisions

I don’t think it is the ‘youth service system’ but the youth mental health service
system that the authors are referring to in the subsection “procedure’.

16. Minor Essential Revisions

In the analysis section it isn’t clear what the term ‘card sort’ means (data from the
piles or data from the each card).

17. Minor Essential Revisions

Is a ‘square symmetric similarity matrix’ the official term – if it is it needs
explanation, if it isn’t then this term isn’t clear.

18. Minor Essential Revisions

The analysis section is extremely complex and could do with additional work to
make sure its meaning is clear. For example at the end of the first paragraph it
would help if there was a summary statement in lay language about what this
procedure in this paragraph produces e.g. a summary or average of the way
statements were grouped together.

19. Minor Essential Revisions
I think the second paragraph of the analysis section needs some restructuring to ensure clarity of meaning. The second half of the second paragraph is particularly unclear. The authors could arrange this section around the two concepts of stress and interpretability and have a paragraph of each that explains what each of these concepts means and how the analysis operates for each.

20. Minor Essential Revisions
There needs to be a clearer explanation of how solutions were evaluated. A point map is explained, but a cluster map is not as well explained – probably there just needs to be a reminder about how the clusters were derived and that this is what the cluster map is.

21. Major Compulsory Revisions
The listing of the labels in the first paragraph of the results section does not add anything to the paper without referring to the additional file. It is not clear that these grouping are meaningful in and of themselves, perhaps invalidating the cluster map, because they don’t appear to be able to guide the development of strategies for implementation of EPB.

22. Major Compulsory Revisions
There is a lot of information provided about how to interpret the figures, at the expense of describing what the results mean. The real reporting of results does not occur until the second to last paragraph.

23. Major Compulsory Revisions
It is hard to know if the results section is correctly structured because the aims are not clear, but it could be that the general results should be described first and then described in terms of the policy and practice groups. If there was never the intention to describe the general barriers and facilitators to implementation of EPB then this final paragraph is not necessary.

24. Major Compulsory Revisions
The discussion section includes statements that don’t appear to be supported or described in the results. For example, the statement about the concerns about the evidence base in the first paragraph is not clearly described in the results. Perhaps this highlights the lack on meaning in the cluster headings.

25. Major Compulsory Revisions
It would be useful if there was more discussion of what factors were common across each group and how to target these areas/address these barriers. There also needs to be more practical discussion about how you do take into account differing perspectives when designing strategies to implement EPB. For example, it could be as simple as saying that both policy makers and practitioners should
be consulted and involved in a collaborative way when designing strategies to implement EPB. It is unclear what authors mean by ‘optimizing message content and delivery method’? It is unclear who the better collaboration is between (end of the second paragraph).

26. Minor Essential Revisions

The discussion of the four phases of implementation should be in the background and help set the scene of the field on knowledge that the authors are intending to contribute to.

27. Minor Essential Revisions

There is a statement in the fourth paragraph that is about context (about different sectors operating in central authority) could go in the methods section as part of a more in-depth discussion of the context in which this study took place.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no financial interests but do undertake research work and publish in the area of implementation of evidence based practice in the youth mental health field.