Author's response to reviews

Title: The e-Health Implementation Toolkit: Qualitative evaluation across four European countries

Authors:

Anne MacFarlane (anne.macfarlane@nuigalway.ie)
Pauline Clerkin (pauline.clerkin@nuigalway.ie)
Elizabeth Murray (Elizabeth.murray@pcps.ucl.ac.uk)
David Heaney (d.heaney@abdn.ac.uk)
Mary Wakeling (mary@bongosoft.co.uk)
Ulla-Maija Pesola (umpesola@informatik.umu.se)
Eve Lindh Waterworth (eva@informatik.umu.se)
Frank Larsen (frank.larsen@telemed.no)
Minna Makiniemi (Minna.Makiniemi@ppshp.fi)
Ikka Winblad (ilkka.winblad@oulu.fi)

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September 18th 2011

RE: 9913010853482741 - The e-Health Implementation Toolkit: Qualitative evaluation across four European countries

Dear Professor Rogers,

I am writing on behalf of myself and my co-authors about the above manuscript. Thank you and our two reviewers for comments and suggestions for our submission. I am submitting an edited manuscript and all changes are showing using track changes as requested by you previously.

In response to Reviewer 1 we have:

1. Provided an example page of the E-HIT (as Figure 1) in the paper to make it easier for the reader to visualise without having to go on to the UCL website
2. Made it clearer in the abstract that there were criticisms of the toolkit
3. Specified that 10 out of 14 participants reported that they would definitely recommend the toolkit to others for use.

As per my e-mail of July 13th, we considered that there were two distinct issues raised by Reviewer 2:

1. Information was sought about a theoretical framework for the nature of the
evaluation we undertook which focused on users’ experiences of using the e-HIT in four international settings

2. It was suggested that we should analyse the e-HIT itself using NPT as a framework.

With regard to the first point, this research was not designed with an explicit theoretical framework in mind. It was designed as a descriptive qualitative evaluation of the e-HIT in use from the perspective of users in a range of international settings. This was to address an identified gap in knowledge about the utility of the e-HIT in settings other than the one in which it was developed (i.e., the UK National Health Service).

During our write up, we did explore the extent to which the evaluation corresponded with a 'realistic evaluation' but, in the end, we concluded that it did not. The reference to realistic evaluation in our previous submission was a typo - we apologise for this and have now removed it from the draft.

Regarding comments about the use of NPT as a theoretical framework for the evaluation, we have reflected on this and acknowledge that NPT did implicitly inform our thinking but, as above, it was not explicitly used to inform our research. We could have done so on the basis that we were interested in issues of usability and workability of e-HIT. However, at the same time, we would argue against using NPT on the grounds that NPT had been used to develop the e-HIT and, in order to be open to finding problems with the e-HIT, it was not/is not a suitable theoretical framework for evaluating the toolkit.

Overall, in hindsight, we can see that it would have been better to have used a theoretical framework to inform the work and this points is now included in the Discussion section under 'methodological strengths and limitations'.

Regarding the second point, it was not the purpose of this research to evaluate the e-HIT itself, per se. This would have required an additional layer of data generation and analysis which we do not have. We feel that this is an area for further research and, based on our thoughts above, there are interesting questions about which theoretical framework may be used to inform such research. We have made this point in the Conclusion as part of our reflections on appropriate areas for future research.

I hope that the revised manuscript is acceptable for publication and I look forward to your response.

With best wishes,

Anne MacFarlane, PhD
Lecturer in Primary Care
Discipline of General Practice
School of Medicine
NUI Galway
Galway
Ireland