Reviewer's report

**Title:** Exploring the feasibility of Conjoint Analysis as a tool for prioritising innovations for implementation

**Version:** 4  **Date:** 1 February 2013

**Reviewer:** Shannon Scott

**Reviewer's report:**

Thankyou For the opportunity to review this important manuscript by Farley et al.. In this manuscript they present an approach (conjoint analysis) for capturing and incorporating professional values into the priorization of healthcare innovations being considered for adoption. This is a critical decision making step in innovation adoption that has not received much attention in the literature. If anything, the approach to unearthing the decision making processes that involve innovation selection, qualitative approaches tend to be used.

There are some essential revisions that need to be made to help with the clarity of the manuscript. Throughout the manuscript some terms were interchangeably used that created some lack of clarity. For example when discussing the project that focussed on 'what' to implement several terms were used including: innovations, interventions and treatments. This is confusing to the reader and I would suggest that only the term innovations is used. In the implementation science literature, interventions (eg audit and feedback, educational sessions) typically refer to the strategies used to help facilitate adoption of the innovations. Thus using the term intervention interchangeably with innovations is not clear and leaves open the possibility for misunderstanding. The same can be said for the term treatments.

I would recommend that the abstract be revised to be more detailed. The abstracts needs to offer the clinical area (postpartum depression) where the decision making process is occurring. The last sentence in the results section of the abstract is unclear. It is not clear if of the 12 innovations being considered if eight were selected or if of the 12 innovations being considered one innovation area was selected and eight different interventions to address the one area were developed. this uncertainty is also evident in the body of the manuscript referring to the same point (page 10). That is, 'guided self help' was the top priority identified for implementation yet eight psychological therapy interventions were selected to be implemented (as part of addressing the identified priority of guided self help?)

I would also be more descriptive in the final sentence of the abstract. I would make this final sentence clearer. For instance, does the team mean that using the response rates of health care professionals completing the conjoint analysis survey?
On page seven the reference by Grimshaw in the second paragraph is incorrect. Do you mean to refer to reference four rather than eleven?

the decision to use a mixed data collection approach of paper and pencil surveys and electronic surveys was not clear. I, personally, have not used conjoint analysis in my own research program, however I was able to follow every step that the team used until we get to table 6 on page 10. Specifically innovation a and innovation b. are these hypothetical innovations? Or do they refer to the top two innovations identified from the study respondents? Further explanation of innovation a and b is needed in the body of the manuscript.

the team did a very good job of identifying the limitations of the study including the poor response rates (11%) yet they did have strategies in place to help mitigate response rates such as these, yet health care professionals are often a challenging group to obtain participation. The notion of stability of preferences over time is an interesting one and an area that does require consideration going forward.

I commend the team on a significant study. Once these revisions are made which would enhance the clarity of their processes, I would recommend publication. Please note, I do not have expertise on conjoint analysis and I recommend that the editor seek the expertise of a researcher with this knowledge prior to publication.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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