Reviewer’s report

Title: Toward systematic reviews to understand the determinants of wait time management success to help decision-makers and managers better manage wait times

Version: 4 Date: 30 January 2013

Reviewer: Andrew Booth

Reviewer’s report:

This is an extremely valuable and well-written manuscript that has obviously benefitted from previous iterations. Given the high standards and reputation of Implementation Science I have just identified several “quick fixes” that would bring the manuscript to an excellent final state. Although these would probably be considered discretionary not mandatory I strongly believe that an hour or two spent addressing these points would be merited in terms of improved comprehension and readability. No further actions, in my view at least, required beyond these.

Discretionary Revisions

1. Abstract – The Background sounds parochial for an international journal. The Canadian context and applicability comes with the stakeholder consultation – it does not need to figure in the Background in abstract i.e.: “For the past two decades, access to healthcare services has been a critical issue in Canada and abroad”.

2. Instead of the vagueness of “the main electronic databases” perhaps list the main three databases in order of yield and then add “plus X additional databases”

3. Very well written Background with clear research objectives

4. Perhaps requires a brief explanation of why the review was conducted in two phases given that the dates don’t seem to correspond with timing of the first workshop?

5. “The data from the systematic review are presented here in narrative form because of the heterogeneity of study methods”. This statement is ambiguous. Presumably you mean the methods (or perhaps designs?) of the Included Studies in the review not the study methods of the review itself!

6. A little more detail required on the selection and utility of the chosen framework other than the fact that you had used it before.

7. Data Extraction: Any observations on the likely consistency/inconsistency of
the data extraction given that you used five extractors? Could you also give brief
details of the types of data extracted (apart from the quotations from descriptions of the WTM initiatives).

8. The number of studies from the United States seems counterintuitive given the
predominance of US publishing and research. Can the authors explain this? –
maybe not in the review itself but in a Response to Referees to increase
confidence that the selection (not necessarily the searching) was done without
any additional implicit inclusion/exclusion criteria?

9. Very good narrative write up of retrieved studies. It has both overview of
studies as a body of evidence together with the particulars of specific initiatives.

10. “Reporting was also cited as a success factor [24,31].” – Reporting has many
meanings and uses - could it be expanded here to a longer sentence to make it
clear what is being referred to without having sight of the two included papers
themselves?

11. Obviously there is repetition in the factors across stages and across levels.
While each section itself is self evident this section would benefit from a brief
“signpost” from the authors at the beginning (and possibly a Figure) along the
lines of “We will start be considering these factors associated with the
implementation, at both the Contextual and Local Levels before proceeding to
examine…….”

12. “Thought-leaders” sounds a little Orwellian – I am more familiar with “Opinion
leaders”. I am assuming the authors have warrant for this term as it is one with
which I, and many readers, am unfamiliar.

13. “Workshop participants, broke into smaller groups” – broke is a verb – I think
you mean broken (not impecunious!). Perhaps “allocated” or “divided
themselves” would be less colloquial.

14. “Third, they reported the same main factors for WTMS implementation that
those identified in our systematic review” should this be “as those” not “that
those”

15. “Given that the period covered by our systematic review ended in 2005”
make it clear again here that this was the period covered by your initial
systematic review which was subsequently updated.

16. It is good that stakeholders identified additional factors/aspects beyond those
in the framework. This is typically an acknowledged limitation of framework
approaches – they encourage people to literally think inside the box or
framework. See Dixon-Woods article Dixon-Woods M. Using framework-based
synthesis for conducting reviews of qualitative studies. BMC Medicine, 2011;
9:39. This demonstrates the added value of stakeholder involvement. It may well
be worth citing this as an additional strength of your methods – this would
augment the existing two sentence paragraph on the strength of your approach.
17. I was confused to see that multiple references are given for a single review which does not seem to link the references i.e. “[63-67]”. Do the authors mean multiple reviews, or do they mean multiple studies in this review or did one author add revisions in additional references but without changing the parent sentence?

18. “Since our systematic review did not explore evidence on the factors’ impacts on reducing wait times” this reads as shorthand. Suggest – “did not explore how these individual factors impacted upon reduction of wait times”

Overall an enjoyable read that will take forward our understanding of the field both practically and conceptually.

**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:**

None