Author's response to reviews

Title: Protocol for Disseminating an Evidence-Based Fall Prevention Program in Community Senior Centers: Evaluation of Translatability and Public Health Impact via a Single Group Pre-Post Study

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor, we would like to thank you for your prompt review and comments on our paper submitted to Implementation Science. We have now carefully reviewed your comments and responded to each of the issues raised. Specific responses are provided below.

There are likely to be clustering effects related to different centers participating in the study. If you do not account for these, any estimate of change in practice is likely to be spuriously precise. Please state how you intend to deal with potential clustering effects in the analysis.

Response: We acknowledge this issue in the data structure that is inherent to our study design. In response to this concern, we have added the following paragraph in our Analysis Plan section.

“Because senior centers are the primary sampling unit (PSU) in this study, a clustering data structure (i.e., participants are nested within centers) can result. To account for potential clustering effects, outcome data will be analyzed with sampling weights and a clustering variable (PSU) that allows correction of the correlation between participants within centers and standard errors of estimates.”

Although you mention the lack of a comparison group as a limitation, I don’t understand how you try to get around this by stating: "This limitation, however, may be muted by the fact that the primary purpose of the study is to determine the dissemination potential of an evidence-based program that has demonstrated effectiveness." You are either aiming to evaluate the effectiveness of an implementation strategy (using a weak study design) or you are not. I suggest that you temper or delete any reference to evaluating effectiveness.

Response: As suggested, we have now removed this statement. We have also revised the limitation section as follows:

“Second, the lack of a comparison or control group because of the pre-post single group design in this study should be kept in mind when assessing the net gain of program effectiveness.”
Please describe the study design in the title, e.g. Disseminating an Evidence-Based Fall Prevention Program in Community Senior Centers: analysis of an uncontrolled before-after study.

Response: following your suggestion we have revised the title as the following:

Protocol for Disseminating an Evidence-Based Fall Prevention Program in Community Senior Centers: Evaluation of Translatability and Public Health Impact via a Single Group Pre-Post Study

We believe the revised title reflects the overall objective of our study: Translating and disseminating an evidence-based program in community practice, which is also in line with the aim of the journal, i.e., “publish research relevant to the scientific study of methods to promote the uptake of research findings into routine healthcare in clinical, organizational or policy contexts.”[http://www.implementationscience.com/]

Please change the referencing system to be compatible with BioMed Central requirements.

Response: We have now reformatted our references throughout the manuscript in compliance with journal’s requirements.