Reviewer's report

Title: Development of a theory- and evidence-based intervention to enhance implementation of physical therapy guidelines for the management of low back pain

Version: 1 Date: 18 September 2013

Reviewer: Christophe Demoulin

Reviewer's report:

This is a well-written paper about a very relevant topic.

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Page 8/28, paragraph “Formative Research Methods”: the authors explain that they made 2 literature reviews; I think that additional data is needed regarding the way they were done, the articles that were considered, .....

2. Page 8/28, paragraph “Formative Research Methods”: According to me, there is a lack of information regarding the participants to the survey: authors do not describe them at all (age,...) although they could have an influence: one can imagine that the age of the PT might influence the guideline adherence.

3. Page 8/28, paragraph “Formative Research Methods”: the authors state “...we aimed to quantify the relation between these cognitive factors and guideline adherence”. However, readers do not understand well how it will be quantify and the results do not really describe the quantification of this relation.

4. Page 8/28, paragraph “Formative Research Methods”: the authors state “Finally, we conducted a longitudinal survey...”. It is not easy for the reader to understand what are the results of this longitudinal study and when they are presented within the manuscript.

5. Page 9/28, paragraph “Formative findings”: authors state “We found the most important personal influences on physical therapists' performance were...” It is not easy for the reader to understand which sample was used (n=394?) and how the “PT' performance” was assessed (did you calculate a score?). Do the readers make reference to a previous publication? It is not clear.

6. Page 10/28, paragraph “Environmental influences...”: the authors state that “The CPGs on low back pain were judged by SOME to lack credibility,...”. If these are original results of the present publication, results regarding barriers should be described more extensively (e.g. % of citation among the sample).

7. Page 15/28: “Evaluation plan”: the authors describe an evaluation plan, about 30 PTs, who were submitted to clinical vignettes to measure adherence to the CPGs…. as if this pilot study had been conducted. If it is the case, giving more details about the results and the methodology (were the clinical vignettes original or used in the literature,...?) would be necessary.
8. Page 17/28: line 8: I think that additional details should be provided regarding
the results of the survey (% of PT incline to follow patient’s preference,…).

- Minor Essential Revisions

9. Page 7/28, 2nd paragraph: I think it would be relevant that authors make some
distinctions between “acute” and “chronic” low back pain which have different
consequences.

10. Page 7/28, 2nd paragraph: regarding the main features of the guidelines,
authors make a reference to the paper of Bekkering and state that “restricting
manual therapy…” is one of the feature. However, in that paper, one can read
only “Manual therapy is not included in these guidelines because these
techniques demand specific knowledge and skills”. Is the restriction of manual
therapy really present in the recommendations stated by Bekkering?

11. Page 8/28, paragraph “Formative Research Methods”: I think that there is a
lack of information regarding the “focus groups”: were they groups of PTs, were
they 29-30 participants in each group? Regarding the cross-sectional survey,
were the participants in the focus groups included in the group of n=472 or were
the participants different in both experiments?

12. Page 10/28, last paragraph: authors state that “…two groups of proposed
intervention participants, physical therapists and quality managers,…”
although p15 3rd paragraph, it seems that physical therapists can also be the
quality manager…

13. Table 2: please improve the layout of the table, check the ATT5d.1, the line
regarding the psychosocial factors (check the numbers) and please remind the
definition of some abbreviations (GL, UE, RL..)

14. Table 3: I wonder whether it wouldn’t be better that the first column is about
“Objective”.

15. Page 13/28: “program description”: Does this part correspond to your
longitudinal survey (n=394)? It is not clear.

16. Page 17/28: the reference number of Michie is lacking.

- Discretionary Revisions

17. Figure 1: Is it relevant to include the “indicators of adherence” and the
“behaviors of the practice managers” in this figure which is related to “physical
therapist’s NON adherence”?

18. Table 3: why didn’t you include the references in the bibliography section and
use instead [numbers] to refer to it?


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:**

I declare that I have no competing interests