Reviewer’s report

Title: Communication practices for delivering health behaviour change conversations in primary care: A systematic review and thematic synthesis

Version: 1 Date: 23 Apr 2019

Reviewer: Michelle DiGiacomo

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript that analyses behaviour change talk in health care consultations. While I see that this manuscript has responded to several suggestions for revisions, I have some additional queries regarding the updated manuscript.

Literature on motivational interviewing would likely provide useful information for the process of eliciting and managing behaviour change talk. Several concepts discussed in this paper (eg health behaviour change talk, resistance) are also discussed in literature on motivational interviewing, but this was absent. It is suggested that the authors unpack behaviour change concepts and features of dialogue in any revision.

What was the rationale for only including discourse and conversational analysis studies?

The origin of the search terms is unclear. Did you only use MeSH terms or others?

If many studies were published in social science journals that were not coded with MeSH terms, leading to potentially missing relevant studies, why didn't you include additional non-MeSH terms?

It is unclear why 2 search strategies were required?

In regards to the literature search strategies, was the first line necessary as discussions about behaviour change and various health states and patient-physician conversation are related to health. Not all health settings where behaviour change is a major topic were included but general practice and primary care were used. What about cardiac rehabilitation?

It is unclear why organ donation and life support were included as search terms.

It was mentioned in the limitations section that most of the included studies were from general practice, yet general practice was a search term. Had other health settings been included, they may also have been captured.

Why was material from 1945 included if DA didn't being until the 1950s?
Why were discussion sections included as data in addition to results (excerpts)? References to discussion sections appeared on page 16. These seem out of place and not necessarily helpful to the presentation of results.

Page 15 - in the excerpt provided, the link is between the health issue and behaviours, the potential consequence and the motivation (being a new parent and wanting to be around for the baby). Getting the person to recognise that what they want (to be with baby - the motivation) is opposed to the potential consequence of the behaviour (not achieving weight loss). It is more than just linking the behaviour to a medically relevant concern; it is helping the person to recognise the dissonance between their behaviour and the desired outcome.

Page 23 - Please explain what was interesting/important/relevant about the included excerpt before moving onto the final category.

Page 27 & 29 - if patient-initiated conversation was successful, how might clinicians facilitate this talk? This would be an important take-away for a clinician who reads this articles looking for advice on having conversations about behaviour change with patients.

Page 30 - Lines 92-95 - it is stated that guidelines mention delicacy of discussion but provide little support on how to deal with resistance. Please link to literature that provides this support.

As previously mentioned, motivational interviewing addresses many of the issues identified in these results, such as how to deal with resistance and any revision should incorporate these concepts to assist clinicians in these types of conversations.

Minor reference formatting issue - There are several places where "Error! Reference source not found" appears in text.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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