Reviewer’s report

Title: Initiating Aha Moments when Implementing Person-Centered Care in Nursing Homes: A Multi-Arm, Pre-Post Intervention

Version: 1 Date: 26 Oct 2018

Reviewer: Eleanor McConnell

Reviewer's report:

Overview: This manuscript reports analyses from a quasi-experimental evaluation of nursing home adoption of person-centered care practices in one state; specifically it examines how skilled nursing homes perceive their adoption of person-centered care practices in 7-domains, and how those perceptions change in response to an educational intervention. The analyses support an a priori hypothesis that "pre-adopters engaging in PEAK 2.0's Foundation year would have lower perceived PCC adoption following a year of education and exposure to PCC, whereas adopters (PEAK 2.0 level 1-5 homes) would have higher perceived PCC adoption following a year of participation in their respective level in the program. The authors interpret these results to mean that exposure to a year-long educational program results in a "shift in cognitive framework: a deeper conceptualization of PCC." They go on to describe cognitive frameworks as a source of resistance to change, and so they propose that changing cognitive frameworks may be an approach through which resistance to PCC implementation may be addressed to improve rate of adoption.

Critique:

This paper addresses an important topic, which is how long-term care (LTC) facility staff perceive their practice as it relates to person-centered care, and how educational interventions influence those perceptions. The analyses are thoughtfully done, and I believe this manuscript, with some modification could add value to the literature on organizational change in LTC. That said, before this is ready for publication, the authors need either to make a better case for how responses on the Kansas Culture Change Index measure represent a "cognitive framework". The paper would be improved by including sample items from the measure. As currently described, I believe the instrument measures self-reported engagement in various activities aligned with "culture change" activities — in essence, perceptions of practice. If responses on this instrument represent a cognitive framework, the authors need to explain how they arrived at that conclusion. Alternatively, the authors could scale back their claims, and just describe what they found — and offer some speculation about what the findings might mean.
Major issues:

1. As noted above, I'm not convinced that the author's have adequately justified their view that changes in performance on the Kansas Culture Change Index measure represents a change in cognitive framework, versus simply enhanced understanding of how person-centered care can be operationalized, or enhanced awareness of their own practices because of some of the educational approaches. I also believe that the section on cognitive frameworks needs strengthening. I understand the justification for being interested in cognitive frameworks, but the "bib' example seems a bit 'out of the blue' and I don't see it tied to the measurement framework. The authors may want to move the text that addresses their view of cognitive frameworks from the discussion section (see p. 16, lines 49-57).

Minor issues:

1. Revise abstract to either eliminate or define terms that are likely to be unfamiliar to most readers, such as the broader meaning of the term "revolutionary change" or PEAK 2.0. The authors helpfully contrast "revolutionary change" with "evolutionary change" in the background section, but as I read it in the abstract, it just seemed like hyperbole.

2. Although I realize that many in US LTC use the terms PCC and culture change interchangeably, I do not think this is helpful. In my mind, strategies that promote culture change from a medical model to a more personalized, holistic approach is a means to effect person-centered care. I think the manuscript would be improved if the authors were more precise in their use of terminology, rather than treating "culture change" as a piece of LTC jargon.

3. Page 6 — Malcom Gladwell is a journalist and observer or interpreter of sociological phenomena, not a researcher. Please edit to accurately reflect his expertise.

4. Page 8 — The description of the core elements of PCC vary across the manuscript, and I would think they would be more consistent. Here the authors discuss "all 12 PCC core areas," but earlier in the manuscript, their primary measure taps into 7 domains. It would be helpful to know how the "PCC core areas" map onto the 7 domains measured in the Kansas Culture Change Index.

5. Page 11 — I would recommend describing the educational intervention a bit more succinctly.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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