Reviewer’s report

Title: Theory and Design of the Community for Successful Ageing (ComSA) Program in Singapore: Connecting BioPsychoSocial Health and Quality of Life Experiences of Older Adults

Version: 0 Date: 19 Feb 2019

Reviewer: David Blane

Reviewer's report:

Dear authors,

This is an interesting paper describing: 1) the associations between an expanded number of BPS domains with the CASP-19 QoL score, and 2) the organisational mechanisms and contexts that influenced delivery of this complex community-based intervention, which combined BPS components in a group of older adults. I have the following comments which will hopefully strengthen your manuscript.

Background

Clear rationale for the BPS focus of the intervention. Not so clear rationale for your proposal of the three additional constructs, though they do make intuitive sense.

I am not convinced that the term "the Third Age" is universally well understood - perhaps "early older age" or a given age range may be clearer.

The weblink at ref [14] is not working.

Method

This is described as a mixed-methods study, using a baseline survey of participants alongside 4 focus groups with program staff and trainers. Strictly speaking, it might more accurately be described as multiple methods, as the use of qualitative methods in this instance is not really helping us to understand or explain the findings of the baseline survey.

You have done a baseline survey, but are there plans to follow this up? That is, to see which of the different interventions (and which contexts) resulted in improvements to QOL and BPS domains?
It was not clear to me if the 1st FGD was a mixed group of GAB and SCOPE trainers with high and low group retention? The term 'high vs low' implies that there were both, but then you describe the 2nd group as a 'mixed group' (presumably meaning mixed backgrounds, i.e. trainers, volunteers, operational staff from Tsao Foundation) - this could be made clearer.

Results

On p.11 - Quantitative section - the OR for SC is not reported, despite it being greater (2.11) than that of S social support (1.88).

In the next paragraph, the BP-P OR(95% CI) reported does not match that in Table 3 - says 3.80 (2.35-6.15) in the Table, but 3.80 (2.45-6.15) in the text.

There is a discrepancy in the B-BP figures also (OR 1.83 in the text, vs 1.72 in Table 3).

The reporting of the qualitative findings could be clarified - main themes in bold are essentially a mixture of contexts and outcomes, while the sub-themes in italics are easy to confuse with illustrative quotes, which are also in italics. Perhaps an additional table of themes and sub-themes would help to clarify.

Not convinced that the anchor image in Figure 3 adds anything.

The expression "top-down grassroots body" seems an oxymoron to me - grassroots usually implies bottom-up hierarchy.

Table 1 - suggest that 2 decimal points are not required after % - one or 0 would be the norm. Some of yours have one (e.g. 100.0) and some have 2 separate points (e.g. 26.0.0 and 38.0.0)

General comment - there are numerous grammatical and spelling errors throughout - needs a careful re-reading and editing.

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.

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

Yes

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