Author’s response to reviews

Title: Internet-based interventions to support recovery and self-management: A scoping review of their use by mental health service users and providers together

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Dr Samuel Harris

BMC Psychiatry

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Dear Dr Harris

Re: BPSY-D-18-00641R1

Internet-based interventions to support recovery and self-management: A scoping review of their use by mental health service users and providers together

Anne Elizabeth Williams, MOT; John Farhall, PhD; Ellie Fossey, PhD; Neil Thomas, DClinPsych

BMC Psychiatry
Thank you again for the reviewers’ useful feedback and the opportunity to make further discretionary changes to our paper to increase clarity. Please find below a point-by-point response letter to accompany our revised manuscript.

We have provided a detailed response to each reviewer/editorial point raised, describing exactly what amendments have been made to the manuscript text and where these can be viewed (e.g. Methods section, page 5, line 12,). We have continued to follow the journal style in making these revisions. A clean copy of our revised paper is attached, as requested.

The overall length of the paper has not changed substantially, as the revisions have included some additional content and some removal of content. We believe that with these changes we have addressed the reviewer’s comments and that the result is a clearer paper.

We look forward to your response to our revisions,

Kind regards,

Anne Williams

Reviewer reports: R2 (3)

(1) a very low number of studies that were ultimately identified;

First, explain more clearly the low number of results given the large number of initial studies (500+ and then 100+). What made the final number so low relative to the amount of initially identified studies given the inclusion and exclusion criteria. I'm not sure this is a limitation, just a bit more explanation is needed.

Response: We have made changes to the section titled ‘study selection’ in the methodology to address this point. We now provide more information that is in Figure 1 in the text, so that the information is more readily available to readers. We now explain the numbers of studies excluded at the different points – on review of title, abstract and full text. The section has now been split into three paragraphs to distinguish between selecting on title and abstract from selection on full text, and to end with the included studies. We have included reasons for exclusion decisions at each of these key points. We have also moved text about the included studies so that it all occurs at the end of the section. We believe that this section now more clearly conveys how our clearly defined inclusion/exclusion criteria led to the final number of included studies.
(2) The results section was a bit hard to follow and convoluted in some areas;

Second and most importantly, I found myself getting a bit lost in the results section. There is a lot of information in this section. I'm not sure what the way forward is - but some clearer sectioning based on themes rather than research questions might help with the flow of the results. I found myself having trouble keeping it all straight and there may be some information that is less relevant than others in the results that could be removed in order to improve readability.

Response: We have made the following changes to the results to make them clearer and easier to follow:

Results have been clearly divided into three numbered sections with new shorter titles – review questions have been removed. The titles and their sub-sections are now:

1. Summary of included studies
   1.1. Study characteristics
   1.2. Study quality

2. Outline of Internet-based interventions
   2.1. Interventions used with usual mental health workers
   2.2. Interventions used with research workers

3. Influences of jointly using an Internet-based intervention on practice
   3.1. Influences on interactions between service users and workers
   3.2. Influences on recovery-oriented practice

   The structure and focus of the results are now described at the start of the Results section, to orient readers (page 10, L 198-203).

   The focus of Section 2. Outline of Internet-based interventions and the supporting Table 4 and Additional File 1 are introduced at the start of Section 2. (page 12, L 244-247).

   Section 2.1, intervention use, has been abbreviated to reduce some of the detail (page 12-13, L269-279).
- Results related to the second and third research questions have now been amalgamated under the third heading: Influences of jointly using an Internet-based intervention on practice. (page 14, L 316)

- Results for 3.1. Influences on interactions between service users and workers now amalgamates the information from the studies with usual mental health workers and research workers, while still making it clear when the information is from the studies with research workers. This section has a brief introduction. A statement about the limitations of the qualitative data has been shifted from here into the strengths and limitations section at the end of the discussion (See page 22, L540-542). Some of the detail has been removed about the studies with research workers, making this section overall shorter. (page 14-17, L317-399).

- The final theme is now labelled 3.2 Influences on recovery-oriented practice (page 17, L 401).

Changes:

Changes have been made throughout the results section, as described above, pages 10-18 Line 197-416.

(3) The details of internet based interventions (i.e. what they do, how they work) could have been better described and explained in the introduction. Perhaps some examples would have been helpful.

Lastly, perhaps some concrete examples and more clarity on what internet & mobile based intervention are (what they look like) and what they actually do in the front section might help clarify the work being conducted. This is minor - but may help with conceptualizing this new area of practice. Overall this is a good article and with some minor revisions should be publishable.

Response: We have made changes to the background section. The second paragraph has been split into two paragraphs. Content in paragraph 2 was shifted and detail added to give more examples of Internet-based interventions. This paragraph now more clearly outlines Internet-based interventions and gives more examples, as requested. The third paragraph now addresses the feasibility, acceptability and benefits of these interventions. A sentence has been added that provides an indication of what Internet-based interventions can achieve. We also added one phrase and reference to the final paragraph in the background section to strengthen our argument for the focus of this review.

Changes: Background, page 4-5, lines 49-62 (paragraph 2) and 64-71 (paragraph 3) and page 5, lines 89-90