Author’s response to reviews

Title: From intervention to interventional system: Towards greater theorization in population health intervention research

Authors:

Linda CAMBON (Linda.cambon@u-bordeaux.fr)

Philippe TERRAL (philippe.terral@univ-tlse3.fr)

François ALLA (francois_alla@yahoo.fr)

Version: 2 Date: 17 Dec 2018

Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

Thank you very much for spending time on our manuscript.

We have modified the manuscript according to your guidelines to improve its readability.

Please find attached two versions (one final and one with apparent corrections).

1. In addition to the overall aim a set of objectives can be set out so that there is more clarity on what is to follow (and no expectation of aspects that the paper will not provide).

=> we have clarified and focussed our objectives

2. I agree with reviewer 3 that there are an array of definitions and so a table / glossary of the key terms, their definitions and references/ main proponents would be valuable. I agree that ‘context’ has not been clearly defined, and there is an opportunity for this prior to the discussion of the influence of context, and of how intervention and context should be distinguished.
• Although I can see the attempts to expand the text, I agree that this does not always provide clarity. I find that there are several instances where the writing style obscures the meaning of the text with long, unwieldy or unnecessary sentences. Examples are the sentence beginning ‘It contains numerous methodological work…; ‘analysing the configurations between contextual parameters, mechanisms and outcomes…’; and ‘In other words, what does “all things being equal” mean in real conditions if elsewhere nothing is in fact equal?’ Could there be more straightforward ways of putting some of the ideas or (as in the last example) deleting altogether. Similarly, I feel there is an overreliance on quotes.

• Linked to the previous point, could the authors find a way to signpost the reader a little more? Perhaps with further and more meaningful subheadings linking with the paper objectives (there are long passages of text where several ideas run into one another). Also at the end of sections instead of ‘To summarise’ could it be possible to have the key message of the section in bold?

• I am not a ‘neophyte’ but I am also not a theoretician. Therefore I would certainly appreciate a more detailed case study, as has been requested. This does not need to be the ‘how to’ that the authors object to, but could at least illustrate the application of the theory with a practical example. In that regard could one of the examples given be expanded on in a separate box outlining the different stages and the lessons learned?
As suggested, we have developed two cases studies in separate boxes (TC REG and EE_TIS) and specified the way we will collect data in the third one (GREEN-CITY)

We hope that this new version meets your expectations.

Best regards

Linda Cambon, on behalf of coauthor