Author's response to reviews

Title: A research-based strategy for managing housing adaptations: Study protocol for a quasi-experimental trial

Authors:

Lisa Ekstam (lisa.ekstam@med.lu.se)
Gunilla Carlsson (gunilla.carlsson@med.lu.se)
Carlos J Chiatti (C.Chiatti@inrca.it)
Maria H Nilsson (maria_h.nilsson@med.lu.se)
Agneta Malmgren Fänge (agneta.malmgren_fange@med.lu.se)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Executive Editor, Christopher Morrey

Please find enclosed the revised version of our study protocol paper MS: 1682473174121889

We would like to thank you for the comments from the reviewers, they have been very useful for our revision and we have targeted them one by one (in bold below) as authors’ response to the reviewer’s report.

Sincerely,

Lisa Ekstam

Box 157, Baravägen 3
Lund University
221 00 LUND, Sweden
Mobile phone +46 72 561 8024
E-mail lisa.ekstam@med.lu.se
Reviewer's report:
This is an interesting paper describing a study protocol of a research-based strategy for managing housing adaptation. The study-protocol has a quasi-experimental design for testing hypothesis. The study context is municipalities, home environment and clients in need of environmental adaptations. Testing hypothesis in this context is a challenge which also the authors put forward in their introduction. These kinds of studies are important since it provide the field with knowledge how research-based strategy for managing interventions can be design and implemented.

1. First I want to comment the aim of the study. As it is written now is says that this study aims to “evaluate the effects of a research-based strategy for managing housing adaptation”. This makes me confused since what this study does is to describe a study-protocol for a quasi-experimental design on a research-based strategy for managing housing adaptation. No result is presented in this study saying anything about the effect of the intervention. Often in the text it says “will be” meaning that it has not taken place yet. Furthermore, both in the abstract and in the discussion (p20, paragraph 3) the authors themselves say that “Once the study has been completed” meaning that it has not actually taken place and no result is presented. Therefore I think that in the aim the word describing is more accurate to use than evaluate the effects. This should be clarified throughout the text as well as in the title. (Major Compulsory Revisions)

1. Authors response: It is correct that no results are presented and that we cannot say anything about the effect of the intervention in the study protocol. The aim is now revised in reflection of the comments from the reviewer:

“The primary aim of this paper is to describe the design of a project evaluating the effects of using a research-based strategy for managing housing adaptations (HAs). Additional aims of the project are to explore and describe this strategy in relation to experiences and expectations (a) among clients and cohabitants and (b) occupational therapists in ordinary practice.”

2. In the abstract under Methods/Design I am missing a description about how the qualitative data should be collected. In the paper under Process data, p15, paragraph 2, the authors say that explorative interviews will be conducted but here in the abstract it only says structured interviews. Could you please clarify this? (Minor essential revisions)

2. Authors response: We have clarified in the abstract that the qualitative data will be gathered as semi-structured qualitative interviews and in the methods section, we have specified how and where the qualitative interviews will be conducted and also by whom (first author).
3. The background is nicely written but there are some reference errors. On page 4, paragraph 3 there are a reference missing on falls and consequences thereof. On page 5, paragraph 3 the authors’ presents facts related to Sweden but have only one reference to a study from the USA. On the same page, paragraph 4, there is a statement about national guidelines but no reference. The first paragraph one page 6 says that there is a need for research-based, structured strategies for both HA and MD but the sentence before says that it is only HA that are insufficient. This makes it hard to know what you really mean. Please clarify this. (Minor essential revisions)

3. Authors response: Thank you for the feedback on the reference errors, they have now been corrected. In the Background (Page 5, Paragraph 3) we have focused on HA and clarified the paragraph related to guidelines for HA.

4. Method section:
- On page 7, paragraph 2 it says that documents will be examined related to each client’s HA. On page 18, Process exploration and evaluation – paragraph 3, the authors specify this saying: grant certification and other documents. What do you mean by other documents? Since you aiming for describing a study-protocol, as a reader, I would appreciate if you could be more explicit. What kind of document are you going to use in the evaluation of the study? Please add this information. (Major Compulsory Revisions)
- On page 8, Participants: paragraph 4, “is effective in both municipalities”. Do you mean the control municipalities? (Minor essential revisions)
- On page 10, second paragraph, I suggest that the two last sentences can be deleted since it has been said before (Minor Essential Revisions).
- On page 13, Secondary outcomes, paragraph - Client goal fulfillment. Important, but I miss information if standards are included in the program for how setting the goals should be done?
- On page 16, Data analyses: In your hypothesis it says that “the new intervention will avoid repeated HA” but in your analysis of data I can’t see how you will prove this. Or will it be captured in what is called “other documents”? Still it doesn’t say what kind of data and how it will be analyzed. Please clarify. (Major Compulsory Revisions)

4. Authors response: The requested information about HA documents has been added, i.e. “documents, such as grant proposals, certificates, grant decisions and invoices related to each client’s HA.” (Page 6, Paragraph 4 and Page 17, Paragraph 3). On page 8, Participants: paragraph 3 we have specified that “the assumption is that an HA is effective in both experimental and control municipalities”. Concerning client goal fulfillment (Page 12) we have specified that this is done both by clients and occupational therapists setting their goals before the HA and their respective evaluation of fulfillment after the HA. We have deleted “avoid repeated HA” from the hypotheses, because the overall hypothesis is that it might yield health-economic benefits. We have also added that data on repeated HA are collected at all times and clarified that all available data on
client and societal levels will be used to identify the variables included in the health-economic analysis.

5. Discussion (needs Major Compulsory Revisions):
Several interesting issues are brought up but partly it is more statements and not so much of a discussion, especially in the beginning of the section.
- First paragraph – the authors say that it is not possible to conduct controlled trials in this area. Could you please expand on this and discuss what this can have for implication when it comes to, for instance, evidence based practice?
- Paragraph 2, another statement: Please expand and discuss.
- Paragraph 3 and 4 is about the new practice strategy and assessments which is very interesting but again the discussion around this is missing. Are there any problems around this like developing these kinds of strategies takes time and resources? Implementing in practice, education?

5. Authors response: Based on the reviewers suggestions we have revised and expanded the discussion.

It is hard to say if this design adequately test the hypothesis since some information is lacking (see comments above). It would be nice with a definition of what HA means in this study since HA are defined in many ways over the world and this is important for replication of the work or comparison with related analyses.
As said before this is an important paper for the field but needs some revisions before being published.

6. Authors response: In the background (page 4, paragraph 2) we have added a definition of what HA means in this study. In addition we have made some language revisions to the paper.

Thank you for the fruitful comments; we have addressed each of them. We think that the reviewer’s suggestions and our subsequent revisions have nurtured the quality of the paper.