Reviewer's report

Title: Developing a mental health care plan in a low resource setting: the Theory of Change approach

Version: 2 Date: 9 February 2015

Reviewer: Mubarek Abera

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Feedback

Major compulsory revisions

1. It would be very interesting for the readers if the authors clearly state the objective of the research on the abstract part.

2. It would be very nice if the method part explicitly addressed the processes of the workshop (methods of delivering the workshop, quality and quality control of the workshop, what was the responsibility of the moderators/facilitators? Who were the trainers and, how the process of the workshop was controlled/evaluated to assure proper implementation of the workshop to keep the desired standard of the workshop?

3. It would have been also good to make the method and process of ToC implementation very clear as to how the following points were properly addressed.

   - Identification of the Long-Term Outcome
   - Development of a Pathway of Change
   - Operationalization of the Outcomes
   - How it was defined for Interventions
   - Articulation of Assumptions

   - How different ideas, opinions and dimensions raised by the participants were managed and consensus reached?

   - How sorting g and narrowing down the list and grouping was made?

   - How the researchers operationalize each indicators so that a research plan for gathering useful data can be designed around it.

   *** So to this end, it would have been very good to describe in detail as to how the ToC was practically implemented and the finding was analyzed and finalized.

4. The four core elements of ToC need to be well described much better than it was seen on the result part.

   - The pathway of change that illustrates the relationship between actions and outcomes
- Indicators have to be well defined and be specific enough to measure success.
- What the intervention was not clear for me
- the assumptions needs to explain explicitly why the whole theory makes sense in this study.

5. It would be nice if the authors make clear as to how
A. The data was collected? Was it in-depth interview? Or focus group discussion? It seems that the data was collected through many data collection methods which needs better description to show for the readers.
B. What were the interview guide and the pints for discussion?
C. How was the idea/information fully been captured during the data collection instant (especially for the interview and discussion part)? How did you assure that there was no lost information during the data collection process?
D. Then afterwards, how the data was analyzed and summarized in the result part?

6. The exact date at which each workshop was implemented needs to be mentioned in the method part under study setting and period.

7. The exact date for the accomplishment of the ToC needs to be clearly stated.

8. Who were the minute holders and how do you train them about capturing data/information out of the discussion? Don’t you think that there is high possibility of lost information? Because minute usually focusses on the main and summary of the ideas/information exchanged by the participants?

9. It has been stated that; Documents about the local healthcare system were reviewed and exploratory interviews with leaders of the district carried out. A situational analysis of the health service context of the district was also carried out prior to the ToC workshops starting.
- make clear about what types of documents were reviewed and how the data was summarized and presented in the result part.
- how many interview was made? Who conducted the interview? How the interview was conducted and the data gathered, and how this interview was analysed and presented.
- what was the situational analysis about? Make it explicitly clear. And how the data of this part also summarized and presented.

10. How do you base your final report on the minutes of the workshop? OR, Is this type of gathering data/information is the right way to this specific type of study design?

11. This study is done in Sodo, one of the Ethiopian districts. So how do you see the inclusion of the cross country workshop as a part of your study to draw the outcome?

12. The Sociodemographic background (age, sex, educational level, occupation, responsibility in that specific area etc) of the participants is really mandatory to be summarized in table form and/or you need to state it in the description part.
13. Health centers are not only staffed by what you maintained on your report at result secession line number 14-15. It includes health officers and laboratory technologists/technicians. The diagnostic and prescribing duties are mainly accomplished by health officers. And there is at least one health office in every health center in the country. How do you see this general fact?

14. The exact outcome of this study is not clear for me.

15. The first part of the limitation (line number 1-3) part, rather I consider it as strength for such new type of study.

Minor essential revisions

1. It would be nice if some language editorial work could be made. It is better to shorten and re-write long statements. Ex.on the introduction part;Line number 8-13 and line number 16-19 are example of a statement with long phrases which were very difficult to be understood by readers. I would prefer not to put a phrase which takes longer than one and half line.

2. Line 4 (The key longer-term outcomes described in the ToC map relate to the community pathways.) in its own doesn't make sense in the community leader pathways.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that, I have no competing interest