Reviewer’s report

Title: A case of misalignment: The perspectives of local and national decision-makers on the implementation of psychological treatment by telephone in the Improving Access to Psychological Therapy service

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Reviewer: Elisa Haller

Reviewer's report:

The present study presents a valuable contribution to understanding challenges involved with implementing telephone-psychotherapy from a system-perspective and potential reasons for variations in offering telephone-psychotherapy as an evidence-based treatment option. The theoretical underpinning of the implementation process is particularly interesting from a health services perspective and is a desirable approach when researching complex processes, such as successfully integration treatments in routine care.

Methods, participants:

The description of the study procedure reveals the broad inclusion criteria of interview partners, but not how the representativeness of the sample or the information power was ensured. Even though the authors state that there was no relationship between the interviewees and the researchers, it is not entirely clear according to which criteria the authors invited the 36 potential participants.

How did the authors ensure that the interview partners talked about their experiences from the perspective of their current role? It appears as though numerous opinions represented by the quotations are informed by personal experience as (former) clinicians, even the narratives provided by national informants. Given that only 5 participants were classified as national informants, it would be important to know what their exact function was or at least - in case detailed role information compromises anonymity - how these individuals differed from the clinical managers in their role, function, and closeness to telephone-psychotherapy.

This also pertains to an aspect raised in the discussion section: I agree that personal opinion is an important factor related to this study, but the important question is from who the personal opinion is presented. For readership not entirely familiar with how NHS is organised, the precise role or "power" of decision-makers is not clear.
Results:

Did the authors gather information about how telephone-treatment is currently implemented and realised in the clinical practices of their respective centres? This would be a valuable information given that the interviewed decision-makers argue that a lack of national policy guidance about implementing telephone-delivered care might be one reason for variations. This would possibly also provide more direct information about the decision-makers' actual influence or impact on how services are organised within the clinical centre.

Line 233: Possibly revise "the importance was considered important"

Lines 276 - 278: This sentence might need revision.

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

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable
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