Reviewer’s report

Title: What do the implementation outcome variables tell us about the scaling-up of the antiretroviral treatment adherence clubs in South Africa? A document review

Version: 1 Date: 21 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Ermel Johnson

Reviewer’s report:

This is a useful study that can contribute to improving the implementation of a program for the benefit of PLHIV. The intention to use the concepts of science implementation is commendable and appropriate for this study.

This study presents a strategy for the delivery of ART and retention of PLHIV in treatment. The publication of this study could serve as an example for other actors involved in the management of LPHIV. The AC model has been very well described in its practical implementation. In addition, the study has the merit of assessing the implementation for an expanding program in the country using science implementation methods and concepts. There is a well researched bibliography on the subject in the context of South Africa.

To improve the easy understanding of the study of the results to be shared, it is of major importance to:

1. Review the title and clearly mention the implementations outcomes studied and make the link with the ACs
2. Provide comparisons between other models of ART delivery and AC
3. Clearly state the research question that will better define the scope of the study and the choice of method
4. The use of validated frameworks for intervention evaluation, such as RE-AIM or PRECEDE-PROCEED, would help to better systematise the choice of study variables and the correlations between them in order to better explain the results obtained. Select the parts of the framework that can be adapted to the data already collected.

In addition, minor revisions should be made to remove shells. It is about:

1. Harmonise the objective of the study in the summary in the introduction
2. Adapt the data analysis according to the framework that will be used
3. Better describe the results in addition to the tables

4. The citation of some references was incomplete (1, 3, 7, 10, 11, 37, 41, 43), as well as the duplication of reference 18 at 23.

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Acceptable

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