Reviewer’s report

Title: Using Qualitative Evidence Syntheses to Develop Implementation Considerations and Inform Implementation Processes

Version: 0 Date: 21 Feb 2019

Reviewer: Jane Noyes

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this reflective paper.

The paper is timely and well written with an appropriate group of authors. The reflections are very useful to methodologists, guideline developers and decision-makers.

1. The paper could however be further strengthened by filling in some of the gaps in the QES production process by cross referencing to another contemporaneous WHO series on producing QES reviews in a guideline context. Specifically, the current manuscript refers to the QES reviews using ‘standardized procedures’ to produce the QES reviews. This is the only reference to how the QES reviews were produced. These 'standardized procedures' were in reality specifically tailored for this context. Readers may be mislead unless there is some qualification of this statement. In addition, only a small subset of QES methods have been recommended as suitable for this context. The authors may therefore want to consider cross referencing to another contemporaneous WHO series published in Jan 2019 in BMJ Global Health. Two papers in particular (Flemming et al and Noyes et al) draw on two guidelines that were also used in the current manuscript to show how the QES methods were used in this context. Flemming's paper also puts forward 3 QES methods (from a wider pool of over 30) that were considered appropriate for a WHO guideline context. These three QES methods were represented in all the QES reviews that contributed to the WHO guidelines used in the current manuscript. Noyes et al also indicates that the Evidence to Decision frameworks were used as the integration mechanism for quan and qual evidence for two WHO guidelines that are described in the current manuscript. I should also declare a conflict of interest as I co-authored these papers. Nonetheless, their potential use and value as linked cross citations here seems reasonable and appropriate given that they use the same source material and help fill a gap in explanation in the current manuscript.

https://gh.bmj.com/content/4/Suppl_1

2. One issue that the authors may want to reflect on is that in the current guideline process, there is no quan/qual synthesis stage before populating the EtD framework. In reality the EtD framework acts as the mechanism for integration - but with very little evidence synthesis. There are however qual/quan data integration methods that are gaining traction as they provide a more nuanced understanding of acceptability, feasibility and implementation issues when the products of the quan and qual reviews are brought together in a third synthesis.

3. "We then circulated the draft papers to key stakeholders to obtain their feedback on the ideas and processes described. These stakeholders included members of WHO guideline panels (sometimes called Guideline Development Groups), methodologists, guideline commissioners, and implementation experts."

It would be helpful to know a bit more detail as to how many people this involved and what sort of input they provided beyond the thoughts of the author team.

4. I've only been asked to review one manuscript in this series. It would have been useful to review all three to have a better idea as to how the papers fit together.

Overall a very well written and useful manuscript.

**Level of interest**
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

- An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

- Acceptable

**Declaration of competing interests**
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?
3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

No to all of the above. This is an opinion piece so by definition personal conflicts of interest are usually considered in a more flexible light. I have worked closely with several co-authors and contributed to the production of some of the reviews mentioned in the article.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal