Reviewer’s report

Title: Out of Sync: A Shared Mental Models Perspective on Policy Implementation in Healthcare

Version: 0 Date: 24 May 2019

Reviewer: Ashley Hughes

Overview
The study reports a robust qualitative and longitudinal study which focuses on shared mental models in implementing Quality Based Procedures (QBPs). Overall, the paper is well written and offers a novel contribution to the areas of health policy. The connections between SMM and policy implementation are fairly clear and well explained. However, there are a few areas in which the manuscript can be improved, namely through clarifying some of the following details:

Introduction: Connection to implementation science
The introduction is very well written and a shining example of how cross-disciplinary research should read. I found the descriptions and definitions of shared mental models to be particularly relevant and associated with key references in this area. The article goes to great lengths at explaining implementation and its various components; yet, the authors do not connect to the literature on Implementation Science. As such, it is relatively unclear to me as to which scientific base they used to inform and deploy their study. This may be a fatal flaw in the paper, or otherwise simply needs to be clarified. More should be added to couch the study in the literature on this at large, if implementation science is an intended area for this research.

Method
Sampling strategy: I'm interested in knowing the purpose of using snowball sampling for this study. Is there something particularly disadvantageous or risky about participating in the study? Otherwise, it would be helpful to know what gaps were intended to be filled through snowball sampling that could otherwise not be captured with purposive sampling.
Participants: What are the roles of those who engaged in your research? Any information you could provide on demographics would be helpful so that the audience can make their own determination as to the level of involvement of participants
Coding: You mention thematic analysis as well as framework-based analysis. I'm assuming this means you used an inductive and deductive approach to identifying codes. Please specify this in the paper along with whatever frameworks were used to help identify codes, along with accompanying cites.
Interrater?: Double coding transcripts is a good practice- is this something you did? If so, how many? What was the interrater agreement on codes? Did you use any software? More details on the analysis would be quite helpful.
Description of QBPs: Non-Canadian audiences may struggle a bit to understand what QBPs are and their overall importance to the Canadian health system. Please elaborate or otherwise refer readers to outside sources where they could learn more about what QBPs entail.

Discussion
The manuscript reports some compelling and interesting findings. I was disappointed by the discussion as I was anticipating more connection to literature at large (more citations supporting and explaining the work), along with ways this problem can be improved. This sounds like a very impactful study, but the implications seem a bit lost in the discussion as currently written.

Minor changes
Page 3, Line 22 - Is this a literature-based definition, or one developed by the research team?
Page 3, Lines 38-43 - Is the definition of mental models from the literature? If so, it needs a citation
Page 4, Line 38 - Discrepancy between "healthcare" and "health care"; In other places healthcare is used
Page 6, Line 4 - Are the definitions in Table 1 adapted from the aforementioned articles (11, 21) outlining the SMM categories?
Page 6, Line 40 - Make "s" lowercase in 'QBPs'
Suggest reviewing phrasing to make sentences more clear and direct. For example, p 7 lines 20-26 With some similarities to activity-based funding schemes (23), QBPs involve replacing some of each hospital's global budget with pre-set reimbursement rates for the management of patients with specific diagnoses or who undergo specific procedures

I believe what you mean to say here is that diverse perspectives may improve the policy development stage....

p. 6 Although diverse mental models may improve decision-making during the policy development stage,

Page 8, Lines 41-43 - Put " around it should be you because this is about quality of care
Page 9, Line 4 - no comma after QBPs
Page 10, Lines 51-53 - Discrepancy between "healthcare" and "health care"

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?

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5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

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None

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