Author’s response to reviews

Title: Building an Integrated Knowledge Translation (IKT) evidence base: Colloquium proceedings and research direction

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Response to reviewers (HRPS-D-19-00220)

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Fadi El-Jardali,
Tari Turner,
Editors-in-Chief
Health Research Policy and Systems

Dear Drs. El-Jardali and Turner, and Members of the Health Research Policy and Systems Editorial Board,

RE: Boland et al., “Building an Integrated Knowledge Translation (IKT) evidence base: Colloquium proceedings and research direction.” (HRPS-D-19-00220)

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your comments and strengthen our manuscript. Below you will find an itemized response to each comment. The manuscript is attached with changes indicated using track changes.

Please let us know if you have further questions or require further clarification,

Yours sincerely,
Ian D. Graham, PhD FCAHS, FNYAM, FRSC

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1. The process of exact conclusions from IKTRN is not clear. There are some proposals (with suggested topic for research) and papers (with suggested ideas or some research based knowledge). How did members discussed them, some papers (additional file 2) have responded to prioritized research agenda?

RESPONSE: Thank you for your question. The basic process from which we drew our conclusions was the following: authors presented invited IKT concept papers at a special meeting which stimulated discussion about the future IKT research agenda. All these concept papers were discussed in both large and small groups to determine the overarching categories that will guide the research agenda. Then, attendees discussed the research priorities within the overarching categories. These discussions were audio recorded, documented and systematically coded using a content analysis approach to inform the proposed agenda. We agree that our labels of the tables and additional files lacked clarity. As such, we have re-labelled our tables:

• Table 1: Characteristics of the concept papers presented at the meeting
• Table 2: IKT categories derived from group discussions
• Additional file 2. Concept papers presented at the IKTRN meeting

We agree that some abstracts were consistent with the proposed research agenda, however, the attendees felt that more work needed to be done in these priority areas. We also made changes to our methods to clarify this process (see item 2, below).

2. In abstract, what is difference or relations between content of lines 34,35,36 (conceptual categories) with 37,38,39 (prioritizes identified for future IKT research)? In the part of "future research agenda", again both of these are written but it's not clear differences or relations between them, how priorities have extracted from categories? The objective of meeting has been identifying the IKT research priorities, as I understand the categorizes and priorities are the same.

RESPONSE: Thank you for this question. To clarify our message, we have edited these sentences in the abstract to read:

“Eight overarching categories emerged from these proceedings: integrated knowledge translation theory, integrated knowledge translation methods, integrated knowledge translation process, promoting partnership, definitions and distinctions of key integrated knowledge translation terms, capacity building, and role of funders. Within these overarching categories, priorities identified for future integrated knowledge translation research included: (1) improving clarity about research co-production/integrated knowledge translation theories and frameworks; (2) describing the process for engaging knowledge users; and (3) identifying research co-production/integrated knowledge translation outcomes and methods for evaluation.”

In our methods, we have edited a sentence to reflect this as well: “We used qualitative content analysis to characterize the IKT overarching categories that emerged from the discussions, as well as priority directions for future IKT research.”

Also, thank you for noting our oversight in describing how we delineated the overarching categories from the research priorities. We have added to the following paragraph to clarify this process under the Methods section: “The format of the day-long meeting involved an opening keynote who reviewed the mandate of the IKTRN and activities to date. Then, attendees presented a 3-minute electronic poster (n=16) of their concept papers (see Additional file 1 for concept paper abstracts; Table 1) to stimulate discussion, which lead to the overarching IKT categories and sub-categories. Subsequently, attendees
were asked to break off into small groups to discuss the concept papers by categories (Table 1) and determine the research priorities. The small groups reassembled for a whole group research priority discussion.”

3. In the first paragraph of background, the authors have defined IKT, a model of research co-production that knowledge users identify a problem and have the authority to implement the research recommendations. In situations which the problem has identified through another source (e.g., priority setting system, media and ....) and research is done with integrated collaboration with stakeholders, according to the authors definition, is IKT or not? How much is important and essential the source of identifying problem?

RESPONSE: Thank you for this comment and we agree with your assessment. We have modified the definition to read: “Integrated Knowledge Translation (IKT) is a model of research co-production, whereby researchers partner with knowledge users who can use or implement the research recommendations and/or findings.”

4. In page 7, line 162, the "objective" is as important as the role, experience and process in engaging knowledge users, why does it absent?

RESPONSE: If we are interpreting your comment correctly, we state that the objective of IKT is broadly accepted to increase the relevance and impact of the research findings via partnership with knowledge users in the research process. Lacking from the state of the science, however, is understanding the role, experiences, and processes for partnering with knowledge users, as we have written in our discussion. If we have misinterpreted the comment, we would be happy to respond again upon clarification.

5. It will be so useful that authors explain "knowledge user", as the author perspective, are knowledge users and knowledge stakeholders, the same?

RESPONSE: In our view, knowledge users and knowledge stakeholders are not the same. We define knowledge users as individuals who can use or have the authority to implement the research recommendations and/or findings. We define stakeholders as all those who are interested in the use of research results but may not necessarily use them for their own decision-making (e.g. governments, funders, researchers, health system managers and policy makers, patients and clinicians). As such, we agree with the reviewer and have removed ‘stakeholders’ from our manuscript and consistently used the term ‘knowledge user’.

6. The attributions of stakeholders’ engagement in research are different by "type" of the, patient, health care provider or policy makers. This issue is absent in this commentary paper.

RESPONSE: Thank you for bringing up this point. We agree that knowledge user attributes are important considerations for future investigation. However, this topic did not emerge from the data, and is thus absent from our reporting in this paper.
Minor considerations:

1. In the page 2, line 48, "it" refers to the IKT but the definition from references 2 and 3, are about KTE as general not IKT.

RESPONSE: Thank you for pointing this out. As you suggest, we have revised our definition and references to the following: “Integrated Knowledge Translation (IKT) is a model of research co-production, whereby researchers partner with knowledge users, who can use or implement the research recommendations and/or findings [1]. According to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), IKT is a research approach that involves having knowledge users meaningfully partner on the research team [2]. Ideally, knowledge users are involved from study conception (e.g., defining the research question) to applying and disseminating the findings (e.g., publication). Theoretically, IKT represents a paradigm shift from solely scientist-driven research to collaborative problem-based research involving researchers and knowledge users generating real-life solutions to complex problems [3]. Involving knowledge users, or individuals who can use the research evidence to inform policy and practice decisions, requires partnership in the research process, as well as significant involvement and influence from knowledge users [4]. Each stage in the research process is an opportunity for collaboration with knowledge users, including the development of the research questions, selection of the study design and methodology, ethics, tool development, selection of outcome measures, data collection, interpretation of the findings, crafting of the message for various audiences, dissemination and application. IKT is a recognized and accepted tenet of knowledge translation that purports to increase the relevance, applicability, and impact of research results [5].”


2. In page 4, lines 81-89, what was the title of "call" and what was the differences between proposal and paper?

RESPONSE: The title of the call was, “Call for Integrated Knowledge Translation Concept Paper Proposals”. In the manuscript, we adjusted the relevant sentence to read, “In 2017, the IKTRN issued a call to Network members to submit one-page proposals for producing critical concept papers of about 20-30 pages in length” to highlight the difference between the proposal and the full paper.
3. One group of members of IKTRN is "trainees", it's better authors describe more about them, do they teach KTE and implementation science, to whom?

RESPONSE: Thank you for this suggestion. We have added the following sentence: “Trainees include individuals at the masters, doctoral, and postdoctoral level working with a supervisor or co-supervisor who is a member of the IKTRN and is engaged in research that uses an IKT approach or is contributing to the science of IKT.”

4. In part of "finding of group discussion", there is not any description about "definitions and distinctions" in next lines.

RESPONSE: We agree with your assessment and have added the following sentence: “IKTRN members identified the need to define and create a common language for integrated knowledge translation, as well as to distinguish it from other similar concepts (e.g., participatory research and patient/community engagement).”

5. In page 3, line 73-74 the name IK Research Network has been used for first time, please use it's abbreviation IKTRN here.

RESPONSE: We have corrected this abbreviation as you have suggested here, and throughout the text.