Reviewer’s report

Title: Using the Knowledge to Action Framework: a citation analysis and systematic review

Version: 1 Date: 12 August 2014

Reviewer: Ian Graham

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper. Notwithstanding my personal interest in the topic, we need more analysis of the use of theory in the field of implementation science.

The paper is well written. The methods for identifying relevant papers and the processes for classifying and analyzing them are appropriate. The conclusions are supported by the data presented.

Some suggestions/comments for consideration.

Under the heading- Using the ‘Knowledge to action Framework’ in practice…

1st para- several frameworks are listed- however is the ‘Normalisation Process Theory’ a framework?

Same page- 3rd para- ‘represented by an inverted triangle’- it is supposed to be and referred to as a funnel in the original paper

Methods section- could the passive voice be avoided- eg- citation searching might be considered… (considered by whom)— It seems to identify all reported citations…(according to whom?)

How do the citation searches used compare to Wiley’s function to identify citations? http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/chp.47/citedby

Can the search be updated to mid 2014 as it is now a year out of data? (not sure much more would be picked up but would be good for completeness)

Can the reasons for record exclusion (Figure 1- prisma flow diagram) indicate the reasons for exclusion and number of papers related to each be disclosed please? (ie breakdown the n=911)

It does not appear that thesis/dissertations were searched specifically (although at least 1 came up), please justify not searching specifically thesis/dissertation databases as to justify not doing traditional searches (or mention in limitations)

Discussion section

Can you please expand on your comments about the use of the K2A mirroring research utilization categories and the implications?
Re comment about selecting outcomes at time of selecting interventions is what often happens (the simultaneous addressing of different phases)- I would also add to this suggestion selecting of knowledge use measures at time of intervention selection.

Re the CIHR evaluation giving equal weight to knowledge products, academic outputs, capacity building- Does the report actually say it gives equal weight to these? Or is it that it just happens that the results related to these three dimensions in the same table?

Re – “a sophisticated coding scheme, with 19…” perhaps mention why the coding scheme was not used (it had not been published when your study started?)

Re- ‘This is noteworthy given Canadian research journals may be published in French- might better worded as- This is noteworthy given Canadian research may be published in French language journals

Re- ‘The screening stage may be criticized for excluding studies about a single knowledge translation strategy. This meant we did not consider many papers about implementation of clinical practice guidelines.’—are you meaning the guideline was the translation strategy and no other implementation strategies were use?—this goes to whether guidelines were the knowledge product/tools to be implemented or whether the guidelines were being used an implementation strategy/intervention for the evidence contained in the guideline? A bit more clarity here would be helpful. You raise this point just before the Conclusion section and it is worth noting that things like guidelines can be knowledge tools and implementation interventions depending on the focus of the implementers but conceptually the implementer needs to be clear about which it is in their project- ie guideline recommendations represent the content of the evidence to be implemented; or the supporting guideline implementation tools may be considered implementation strategies (easy to use algorithms, documentation aids, corresponding patient decision aids etc). Even with the former- other dissemination strategies are usually used beyond release of the guideline.

Conclusion section
- 2nd para- the k2a may provide a practice, yet flexible guide… as you suggest or/and the 10 papers could have used the k2a to structure their results/paper as a literary device?

You might find interesting ch 3.7a on p249 of the Knowledge Translation in Health Care (2013 2nd edition). This chapter was written and copyedited for the 1st version of the book and then inadvertently left out of that edition.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable
**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I am lead author on the Knowledge to Action framework. I am a co-author on 2 of the papers that used the framework in an 'integrate' way—Stacey et al 2009 and Straus et al 2008. I am also co-editor of Knowledge Translation in Health Care (2nd edition 2013) which is based on the K2A framework. I receive no royalties from this book.