Author's response to reviews

Title: Understanding evidence: a statewide survey to explore evidence-informed public health decision-making in a local government setting

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Author's response to reviews: see over
17<sup>th</sup> September 2014

TO: Implementation Science Editor and Reviewers

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Reviewer comments. Please find below a detailed response to each comment.

Reviewer A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reviewers comment</th>
<th>Authors response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now that the paper is clearer, it does not seem to make theoretic sense to suggest the paper is applying 'diffusion of innovation theory'. In my view this is adding theory for theory's sake (which as the paper points out is what makes academic research less accessible and influential). A specific innovation is not being followed and the paper does not convince me that innovation is what is being looked at or 'diffused' when evidence is being sought after. In what sense is diffusion of innovation different from the diffusion of any idea/information (whether innovation or not). If a particularly piece of knowledge (such as a research report, which might be considered innovative in its idea) was being followed across all informants to assess its uptake or diffusion, then the theory is more suitable. Perhaps more importantly, the study doesn't currently benefit from the innovation body of scholarly thinking; it reads as more of an add on.</td>
<td>Additional file 1 highlights where diffusion of innovations theory was used to inform question development. The interview process was also informed by this theoretical perspective in gaining participants experiences of how evidence is defined and then applied within organisations. We have added some additional information on page 6 to clarify this. While the paper does not describe the implementation of an intervention, this baseline survey formed the development of an intervention and so this perspective was used in the development of the tool to ensure that diffusion could be explored at outcome. The authors feel that it’s important to disclose the use of this theory so that its a priori use is clear.</td>
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<td>A minor point, but the '2' in the title does not make sense to me- evidence 2 is not a concept that is readily familiar to many readers I would suspect. Is this Cooksey's type 2 gap, Sackett et al's level 1-4 (but only focused on level 2) One of these options is what I would expect in reading the title before reading the paper, though I suspect the authors are meaning the level of evidence that is considered 'research'. If this latter is the case, then perhaps saying 'research evidence' would be clearer for potential readers using a search strategy to find articles that match their interest.</td>
<td>This is an error. The papers were originally submitted as a set of 2 (the first being a description of the development of EvIDenT). The 2 has now been removed.</td>
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## Reviewer B report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reviewers comments</th>
<th>Reviewers response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Methods for qualitative study (Sentences 3 and 4 in Results section) should be</td>
<td>Amended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>described in Methods, not in results. (compulsory)</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>The abstract is heavy on methods description perhaps at the expense of</td>
<td>Methods section has been shorted and additional content has been added to the results section of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>highlighting results just a little more. Is it possible to bring any main points</td>
<td>abstract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from the conclusion section to this and reduce the methods description eg, the</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>focus of questions in qual interviews? (discretionary but more people will read</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>the paper if this is done)</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>The background on local government is now much better and sets the scene well for</td>
<td>Not integral to the paper and so change had not been made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>international readers. One thing worth noting that is unique to Victoria is that</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>immunisation is provided primarily via local government and hence has a relatively</td>
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<tr>
<td>more prominent role in immunisation service delivery. While this fact is not</td>
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<tr>
<td>integral to describing the setting, the authors may wish to consider whether it</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>is relevant to the findings at all. (discretionary)</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>4. What are “ethics documents”? Does this refer to the consent form? If so, this</td>
<td>Re-worded to “organizational consent”.</td>
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<td>should be made clear. (Compulsory)</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>5. The qualitative analysis description is now more comprehensive and satisfactory.</td>
<td>This sentence now reads “Emerging issues were considered and noted during data collection, which also</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the following sentence mean that these emerging issues shaped the</td>
<td>helped to inform and strengthen interviews as they progressed”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subsequent interviews? If so, this should be clearer. (discretionary but useful)</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Emerging issues were considered and noted during data collection, which also</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>helped to shape and strengthen interviews as they progressed”</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Having asked about methodology in my original review, I feel that the overall</td>
<td>The authors feel that the methodological defense now adds strength to paper and so resolve to keep in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qual analysis process is sufficiently described to not require a defense of not</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>using any one particular methodology.</td>
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The background on local government is now much better and sets the scene well for international readers. One thing worth noting that is unique to Victoria is that immunisation is provided primarily via local government and hence has a relatively more prominent role in immunisation service delivery. While this fact is not integral to describing the setting, the authors may wish to consider whether it is relevant to the findings at all. (discretionary)

Emerging issues were considered and noted during data collection, which also helped to inform and strengthen interviews as they progressed.

The authors feel that the methodological defense now adds strength to paper and so resolve to keep in.
Therefore, suggest sentence on page 11 just state: “Knowledge translation perspectives and theory guided the overall study, data collection and analyses.” (discretionary)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>7. Authors need to ensure that all KT mentions are removed and replaced with knowledge translation, except in relation to KT4LG. (compulsory)</th>
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<td>Amended</td>
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<th>8. In this study, what does “Public Health Managers” refer to? Are they internal or external to LG in Vic? (compulsory)</th>
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<td>Page 18 – have now specified that PH Managers are managers of public health departments within LGs.</td>
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<th>9. The Limitations section mentions the commonalities identified in responses but then in next sentence, the variation within local government. This should be clarified or better expressed. (compulsory)</th>
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<tr>
<td>A number of commonalities were identified at the organizational level. The commonalities that existed ACROSS LGs has now been noted. However at the individual level, within councils, we found some variations in practitioners responses. We therefore conclude that it is important to ask more than one person within LGs.</td>
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<th>10. Page 9 space missing before All</th>
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<th>Page 11 (O and L reference 2006) ??? Compulsory</th>
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We look forward to the reviewers responses to our amendments.

Rebecca Armstrong (on behalf of the author team)