Reviewer's report

Title: Increasing upper-limb exercise provision in stroke rehabilitation: development of a behaviour change intervention and measuring implementation fidelity

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Reviewer: diane dixon

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This paper describes the process used to develop a practice framework to promote the use of repetitive upper limb exercises by stroke rehabilitation professionals.

The problem of upper limb impairment and their resulting disabilities is an important one for stroke survivors. The evidence base for the effectiveness of repetitive exercises is good but the implementation of such interventions into standard clinical practice is generally poor. The topic is, therefore, of importance.

The study is generally well described.

I have the following comments for the authors:

The target behaviours for patients listed in Table 1 are not behaviours, for example, having motivation to exercise is not behaviour. Motivation is a prerequisite for much volitional behaviour but it is not behaviour per se, it is an antecedent to behaviour.

More details on how the BCW was used to guide the development of the intervention would be useful.

Similarly, more details of the piloting of elements of the intervention would also be of interest to readers. For example, were all elements of the intervention piloted, and if not how/why were particular elements chosen to be pilot tested and how were they pilot tested?

Are there plans to evaluate the resulting practice framework? Currently, it appears that the framework is being used at the development site only. It would be helpful to learn of plans to evaluate formally the effectiveness of the framework both in terms of change in health professional behaviour and patient outcomes. Inclusion of this information would broaden the interest in the current paper and future reports of the evaluation of the practice framework.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests