Author's response to reviews

Title: Sustainability of Evidence-Based Healthcare: Research agenda, methodological advances, and infrastructure support

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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The Implementation Science Editorial Team  
Implementation Science Editorial (impsci@biomedcentral.com)  

Dear Editorial Team:

Thank you for the thorough and helpful review of our manuscript. This letter describes the changes we have made in response to reviewer comments.

Minor essential revisions:

Reviewer one:

*Conduct a thorough edit, several sentences have missing words.*

We have edited the paper, correcting several errors.

Reviewer two:

*The introduction was well written and well argued but would benefit from a sentence or two on the factors related to sustainability in the sparse available literature.*

We have added a sentence to the introduction, with appropriate citation.

“The sparse available literature suggests that intervention adaptation, fit with context, continual financial support, training, fidelity and leadership contribute to sustainability.”

*The introduction generally addresses healthcare broadly, but occasionally uses the term mental healthcare. It might be better to consistently use Healthcare.*

Thank you. We drew on literatures from physical healthcare, mental health, and public health—all fields that struggle with sustaining evidence-based care. We have reviewed and edited the paper, using the term healthcare as you suggest. We now only use the term mental healthcare when listing the various literatures we drew upon for this project.

*The selection of the 65 out of 94 experts identified in Phase 1 invited to the sorting and ranking task was not adequately described and neither was the process for selecting the 35 invited to the conference.*
We have added information about our selection criteria for both the sorting and ranking and the conference. The manuscript now explains that we targeted invitations to participants who represented different roles, healthcare arenas (medicine, mental health, and public health.) We selected only one member of any collaborating team, consulted with our funding agency project officer, attempted to maximize diversity in gender, race, and research experience, and explored potential to travel on the conference dates.

*There is no limitations sections yet the participation rates for brainstorming (50/94- 53%), sorting (19/65- 29%), importance ranking (18/65- 28%) and challenge ranking (13/65- 20%) are all suboptimal. This should be acknowledged and the implications for the findings should be discussed.*

We have now added a strengths and limitations approach to the conclusion, and noted that the lower than optimal participation rates—particularly in the rankings phase—likely reduced the variation in perspectives (since fewer people participated).

*The conclusion section is repetitive. The authors should consider deleting the description of the project purpose and methods.*

We have edited the conclusion section, deleting the project purpose and methods.

Reviewer two: Minor comment:

*Table 3 added no new information. The authors should consider deleting it.*

We have deleted Table 3.

Other comments:

*As the article provides a research agenda on sustainability research, would be good to identify that in the title, that is offers a research agenda.*

Thank you. We have done so. Our new title is, “Sustainability of Evidence-Based Healthcare: Research Agenda, Methodological Advances, and Infrastructure Support.”

*Abstract, I don’t feel that the article lives up to what is promised in the abstract. First reference is made to providing information that can be used in under resourced settings and with vulnerable populations (“The later stage challenges of scaling up and sustaining evidence-supported interventions receive too little attention, particularly for under-resourced settings that serve vulnerable populations), however, the article does not provide this, other than to note that information is needed for under-resourced settings and vulnerable population. Second, the abstract promises that the article will “extends the emerging literature on sustainability of evidence-based
healthcare,” it does not really do this in any substantive way, it does provide a research agenda, should that be considered an extension of the literature? Debatable and it would depend on why someone is coming to the literature. The article does not provide information that would help a practitioner or manager with sustainability. It would help a researcher and research funders in moving forward with research, so if that constitutes an extension of the literature, so be it. Last the conclusion does not do justice to the research agenda that was developed as it is very generic and could be applied to any area of research or health care, and is not reiterated in the body of the article. Overall, the abstract could be substantially improved.

Thank you for this observation. We have edited the abstract to ensure that it is more consistent with the body of the paper.

Thank you for the opportunity to resubmit the manuscript and strengthen it through these revisions.

Sincerely

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