Reviewer's report

Title: Evidence-informed policy formulation and implementation: Comparative case study of two national policies for improving health and social care in Sweden

Version: 1

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Reviewer: Raj Behal

Reviewer's report:

Overall, this is a well written manuscript and addresses an important topic, if it can be more sharply focused and clarified:

Major compulsory revisions:

1. I have two related comments on the aim of the study:

1a. First, the aim stated in the abstract (compare two policies, and test a new conceptual model) is not the same as that stated in the body of the paper (increase our understanding of the policy process BY comparing two policies). The authors should clarify the actual aim.

1b. Second, a comparison of two policies the authors consider "typical" as an aim is less interesting to the (international) reader, unless the authors consider these two policies to be important for national healthcare strategy. Additional justification is needed to help reader understand why these policies, and why only two policies were considered, e.g. were other policies considered?

As stated above, the authors should clearly identify the primary aim, and if necessary add a secondary aim. In any case, statement of aims needs to be consistent across the manuscript.

2. The authors highlight their main finding that use of evidence varied greatly between the two policies. If the intent is to demonstrate the extent of variation in use of evidence, the authors will need to analyze a larger number of policies. Had they selected different two policies, they might have found no variation.

3. The paper would be stronger if the longitudinal outcomes of the policies were better known. It is difficult to surmise whether methods used for formulation and implementation of one policy were superior to the other policy's methods to achieve desired outcomes. The authors acknowledge this limitation.

4. The authors also draw conclusions about the usefulness of the conceptual model (page 25), they do find limitations and make refinements. Although these are useful insights, a reader may infer that the conceptual model used throughout the paper may be suboptimal. The authors may wish to address this potential concern with a statement of reassurance that despite the need for refinements, the conclusions drawn from use of the model remain valid.
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.