Reviewer’s report

Title: Specification of Implementation Interventions to Address the Cascade of HIV Care and Treatment in Resource Limited Settings: a Systematic Review

Version: 0 Date: 12 Jan 2017

Reviewer: Andrew Booth

Reviewer’s report:

Overall a very interesting analysis which extends our understanding of intervention reporting beyond the general to the specifics of HIV and which illustrates the implications of poor reporting for implementation. Unfortunately, the manuscript is let down by intermittent spelling/typographical errors, unclear phrasing and missing words which detracted from the reading and manuscript flow.

Abstract

Remove both references to "proposed by Proctor et al" in the Abstract (Reference will be sufficient in the main body of the text).

Change "Dissemination of standards such as those proposed by Proctor et al. for reporting can promote transparency, reproducibility and scientific accumulation" to "Dissemination of standards for reporting intervention characteristics can promote transparency, reproducibility and scientific accumulation"

"in in Africa" - delete one "in"

"may be a widely generalizable strategy for supporting the ability for newly diagnosed patients to navigate the psychological as well as practical aspects of treatment" - unnecessarily wordy Prfere: "may be a widely generalizable strategy to support newly diagnosed patients in navigating the psychological, as well as practical, aspects of treatment"

"SMS" - first time in full with abbreviation in brackets

"Accumulation of generalizable knowledge about implementation interventions addressing HIV in low and middle income countries (LMIC) depends on adequate specification and reporting interventions in implementation research - without which reproducibility, transparency, and generalizability are undermined." - Again this is unnecessarily wordy "Accumulation of generalizable knowledge about implementation interventions" and "implementation research" are essentially synonymous.

"Many studies have synthesized outcomes of implementation interventions [11-16], but none have explicitly addressed the completeness of intervention specification and reporting" - you
should make it clear that you are referring here specifically to the context of HIV/AIDS because as a general statement this would be untrue.

"In the identified manuscripts, we document the completeness of intervention reporting using an approach adapted from Proctor et al." Clumsy construction. Prefer: "We document the completeness of intervention reporting in a set of published reports using an approach adapted from Proctor et al." Strictly speaking these reports are no longer "manuscripts" which typically is used to refer to submissions before publication.

"and thereby influence standard practices research community addressing HIV treatment in LMIC." Word(s) missing?

The search strategy as reported in the paper misses most of the essential ingredients of search strategy reporting (cp STARLITE - sampling strategy, type of study, approaches, range of years, limits, inclusion and exclusions, terms used, electronic sources). I know that much of this detail is contained in Supplementary Appendix 1 but within the text I can see reference only to type of study (comparative) and inclusions and exclusions. Within the text itself we particularly need to know databases searched, years and languages searched, and any supplementary approaches e.g. follow up of references etcetera. The supplement should be primarily for the search terms used.

Similarly, the description of the sifting process is an essential part of a systematic review method and should not be relegated to an appendix. Placing essential details of Methods in an Appendix is not PRISMA compliant.

Correct "until of analysis"

Correct "should we specified"

Specifically refer to COM-B in the following sentence: "we operationalized the action target to be the capabilities, motivations or opportunities of an individual or organization which mediates the effect of the intervention on a subsequent desired behavior based on work by Michie et al"

"no two papers studied the exact same intervention" - Strictly speaking you have by this stage moved from papers (the unit of retrieval) to studies (the unit of analysis) so prefer "no two studies examined the exact same intervention" - of course you could retrieve multiple study reports from the same study in which case they would contradict the statement you have made.

"presented in a manuscript" - prefer "study report"

Correct spelling of "principle components analysis (PCA)."

"235 received full reviews of abstracts and full text when necessary" This a cumbersome construction partly because of the recurrence of the word "full". Prefer: "The abstracts, and where necessary full text, of 235 articles were examined by both reviewers".

"intervention in South Africa which facility based staff made home visits" Word missing.
Either delete "of" or add "the" in the following: "We additionally redistributed two of dimensions with small numbers for a total of ten final intervention groupings"

The ten intervention groups would be better in a table with numbers of occurrences of reports of each rather than in the "listing " paragraph from facility based delivery through to non-facility based delivery (p. 8)

"The actor was reported below 50% in facility-based service delivery" - Avoid this potentially ambiguous shorthand, Prefer "The actor was reported in less than 50% of reports of facility-based service delivery interventions" etcetera

"generally not optimally reported" Adding "optimally" here conflates the issues of whether they are reported at all and whether they are reported fully. Please check which of these is/are correct based on what you analysed.

"Action target reporting followed a similar pattern health care worker improvement" Should "with" be inserted after "pattern"?

"The behavioural target was reported in more than 75% of the time for six out of the ten approaches" Avoid "of the time" in all occurrences because of potential for confusion with temporality dimension. Prefer "75% of the reports".

"higher reporting" - this is not a valid concept - either "higher levels of reporting" or more probably "more complete reporting" Similarly with all occurrences of "low reporting"

"The only dimension commonly reported more than 75% across cascade steps was the behavioral target." - Again this is shorthand which obscures precise meaning.

"Overall, we found that implementation interventions addressing adult HIV care and treatment are not optimally specified." I suggest that you report completeness of reporting (across reports) first followed by specification of reporting (within individual reports). As mentioned the term "optimally" can potentially confuse these issues.

"even this dimension was only reported in only 67% of manuscripts" Replace "manuscripts" with "papers"

"67% of manuscripts - substantially below the desired 100%." This sounds rather patronising! Perhaps prefer "67% of manuscripts, falling substantially short of universal coverage." Or similar.

You only introduce the two occurrences of intervention phenotypes/phenotypic in the Discussion. It might be helpful to introduce this term earlier in the description of the classification process.

"the average completeness of reporting of reporting" No we need "Of reporting" twice?
"The absence of change" - Prefer "absence of improvement" as only uni-directional change is desired here.

"that dissemination efforts to bring fresh from outside of the field are needed." Words missing?

"Although much of the efforts in transparency have focused on analysis" Prefer "Although much effort in improving transparency has focused on analysis"

"Variation in peer based interventions along with the variable reporting" Insert "delivery of" to improve rhetorical point "Variation in the delivery of peer based interventions along with the variable reporting"

"is perhaps one reason" - No that is two reasons!

"influenced peers health workers" peer not peers

"prepped" consider either "prepared" or placing "prepped" within quotes.

"Mechanistic clarity positions results to have maximal relevance for diverse contexts." While this is admirably terse it takes re-reading for understanding. In particular, "mechanistic" seems judgemental which seems to be the first time you have acknowledged this side of the debate. Perhaps clarify as "While some commentators may criticise such mechanistic clarity we should acknowledge its critical role in positioning results so as to have maximal relevance for diverse contexts"

"First, there is no single search term that will automatically identify implementation interventions." - "automatically" is not the point here - your meaning implies "consistently identify"

References:

Some references are incomplete e.g. Volume; Issue Page Nos for "Govindasamy D, Ford N, Kranzer K. Risk factors, barriers and facilitators for linkage to art care in sub-saharan africa: a systematic review. Aids 2012." In this case having "art" in lower case obscures the abbreviation!

And:


e.g. "Zeng W, Rwiyereka AK, Amico PR, Avila-Figueroa C, Shepard DS. Efficiency of HIV/AIDS Health

Numbers on PRISMA flowchart need checking e.g. 9719 + 235 ≠ 9955; and 9109 + 608 ≠ 9719

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