Author’s response to reviews

Title: Evaluation of real-world evidence for the effectiveness of academic detailing on appropriate prescribing of pain relief medication in Belgian general practices: a cluster randomized trial

Authors:

Robin Bruyndonckx (robin.bruyndonckx@uhasselt.be)
Veronique Verhoeven (veronique.verhoeven@uantwerpen.be)
Sibyl Anthierens (Sibyl.Anthierens@uantwerpen.be)
Koen Cornelis (koen.cornelis@intermut.be)
Katelijne Ackaert (katelijne.ackaert@cm.be)
Birgit Gielen (birgit.gielen@intermut.be)
Samuel Coenen (samuel.coenen@uantwerpen.be)

Version: 1 Date: 28 Jun 2017

Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Prof. Sevdalis,

Re IMPS-D-17-00254, Evaluation of real-world evidence for the effectiveness of academic detailing on appropriate prescribing of pain relief medication in Belgian general practices: a cluster randomised trial.

We would like to thank the associate editor for discussing our manuscript and are delighted to read that it would be of interest to your readers after addressing the points you made. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to revise the manuscript. We believe we have addressed all comments as itemised in our point-by-point reply below.

Editors' comments (if any):

We have read and discussed your paper within the editorial team in the first instance. Whereas we are in principle interested in the research that you report, we are struggling to see the immediate and direct relevance this study makes to the field of implementation research.
We are not suggesting that you study is not relevant to the field; however, the way the paper is written does not make this explicit at all. The aim of our Journal is to advance implementation research – and to this effect we would really like to see in your submission the contribution that this study makes to advancing the field of implementation science.

This will likely require some editing, prior to a resubmission – which we would certainly encouraging you to do. We would expect a clear presentation in the introduction of the implementation research question that the paper addresses, and how it is doing so.

In the introduction, we elaborated on why real-world evidence was used, rather than a traditional study and clarified that we were interested in whether or not the academic detailing service (ADS) was effective, and how different factors influence this effectiveness. Revealing factors that positively impact the effectiveness of the ADS would enable the ADS to optimize their implementation. In addition, we adapted the title in order to clarify the immediate link to the field of implementation research: “Implementation of a guideline on appropriate prescribing of pain relief medication by means of academic detailing: a real-world cluster randomized trial in Belgian general practices”.

This thread should be then consistent throughout the methods and results; and revisited in the discussion, where we would expect to see some reflection on how the study adds to our understanding of implementation strategies and their application.

In the discussion, we elaborated on the effect modifiers that were found in the study, and draw some important conclusions related to implementation of academic detailing visits (namely that changing the drug that is prescribed seems to be more easy than stopping the prescription of this drug altogether).

I trust these comments make sense. We are very interested in your study and very much hope you can pitch it at the right level for Implementation Science.

We believe that this manuscript, with the included adjustments and adjusted title, is better suited for publication in Implementation Science as compared to the original version and hope that you will give it your full consideration.

With kind regards,

Robin Bruyndonckx, on behalf of all co-authors.