Reviewer’s report

Title: Navigating the Sustainability Landscape: A Systematic Review of Sustainability Approaches in Healthcare

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Reviewer: Marie Pierre Gagnon

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Title: Navigating the Sustainability Landscape: A Systematic Review of Sustainability

Methods in Healthcare (IMPS D-17-00635)

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript that presents a systematic review of methods to support or influence sustainability in healthcare.

Although sustainability is not a new problem for healthcare innovations, such a synthesis can be useful to map the field and identify knowledge gaps.

However, for this review to make a significant contribution to the theory and measurement of sustainability, more conceptual clarity is needed. The working definition of sustainability is provided (continuation of the health benefits from an initiative, continuation of initiative activities and capacity built in the workforce or community), but it is not clear how this definition was used in guiding the synthesis.

In the Methods, under Search and Information sources, please indicate the search dates.

In the paragraph Data collection process and study selection, it is stated that ‘20% of the full text articles for inclusion. Any differences in selected articles were discussed and inclusion and exclusion criteria were refined to reflect these discussions’. This is not a common approach for a systematic review to refine the inclusion/exclusion criteria along the way, so could the author provide more details about how this modified the selection criteria?

More details about the Quality Assessment should be provided. What tool was used? How was the quality of studies considered in interpreting the results?

In the Results section, the number of studies retained (62) is large and gathers very different types of literature, mostly frameworks and models, for which constructs could be identified. However, it is not clear how the sustainability constructs were identified for other types of
methods (e.g. tools, checklists). Were the authors deducing the underlying constructs when these were not explicitly mentioned and if so, on which basis was this done?

The authors propose a Consolidated Framework for Sustainability Constructs based on all the different constructs identified in the literature, grouped under 6 themes. Was inter-rated reliability verified?

Minor corrections

On p. 4, Please correct: ‘Sustaining worthwhile changes poses a challenge to those undertaking an improvement initiative’.

On p.5 ‘lack of consensus on how to define sustain sustainability’

On p. 11, ‘The sustainability methods come in a variety of forms: Frameworks/Conceptual Frameworks (32), models (16), tools (8), guidance strategies (4) checklists (1), and Processes (1).’ Please use either capital or lowercase letters.

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An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English
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