Reviewer’s report

Title: Comparison of Rapid vs In-Depth Qualitative Analytic Methods from a Process Evaluation of Academic Detailing in the Veterans Health Administration

Version: 0 Date: 07 Sep 2018

Reviewer: Linda Sundberg

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to read and review this interesting manuscript. The paper is well written and the authors show solid knowledge in the field of implementation science. This is a potentially important contribution to increase the impact of qualitative evidence on policy and practice.

The main challenge of using rapid analytic methods is of course to sustain scientific rigor and maintain the strengths of qualitative research in terms of detail and complexity, i.e. obtain balance between trustworthiness and speed as formulated in McNall et al., 2007.

I have the following questions and concerns:

1. The RA approach is compared to an "in-depth analysis". The analytical approach "in-depth analysis" could be clarified and anchored in the qualitative research field. What is the definition of "in-depth-analysis", what type of qualitative approach is it? References to this method? Now the "in-depth analysis" is presented as a kind of generic qualitative analysis. To be able evaluate the advantages/disadvantages of the RA-approach it is important to understand against exactly what qualitative method it has been compared to. As it is described in the method section, it seems to me as a directed content analysis (e.g. Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

2. I would suggest that the authors would develop their methodological concepts to assess trustworthiness and reliability of the method - beyond consistency in findings. See for example Graneheim & Lundman, 2003 and the concepts of creditability and transferability, which I find of particular relevance for this study. This would have implications for all parts of the manuscript. It is not surprising that the findings are consistent as the CFIR framework has been used in deductively in both the compared approaches.

3. The argumentation for using REM and rapid-cycle evaluation approaches should also mention their known limitations (e.g. Ash et al, 2008; McNall et al, 2007) in the background section (p.4).
4. The case provided in the study - a successfully implemented AD-program to motivate provider change when new drugs coming to market - is at rather straightforward "implementation object". It would be interesting if the authors elaborated on how the characteristics of this successful case may have influenced the results. In other words, is the RA-analysis also suitable for interventions/projects that are more complex?

5. Full description of methods of data collection and analysis, establishing trustworthiness is referred to an unpublished publication (page 5, line 50). Consequently, these aspects cannot be assessed. I suggest that "analysis" can be omitted from this referral, as a detailed description of the analysis actually is presented in this manuscript.

6. Some readers might be confused by the relative extensive method section (6 pages), and the rather slim result section (about 2 pages). Still, this is what we often see in method-papers. The authors might consider some re-dispositions to make the different sections of the manuscript more balanced.

References:


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An article of importance in its field

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