Reviewer’s report

Title: How do researchers conceptualize and plan for the sustainability of their NIH R01 implementation projects?

Version: 1 Date: 26 Sep 2018

Reviewer: Joanna Moullin

Reviewer’s report:

The paper draws attention to the limited focus on sustainability planning in NIH trials. The paper as many limitations as stated, so I believe is suitable as a brief report.

General

*You have labelled Tables, Figures and Appendices also as Additional Files, which is very confusing. Please label Tables starting from 1, Figures starting from 1 and Appendices as Additional Files starting from 1. Therefore Appendix A becomes Additional File 1. Include only one form in the brackets.

Background

* The first sentence - is it true? If so, please reference the statement, if not I suggest changing to "Despite progress in research to narrow the research to practice gaps"

* Line 53 add in NIH so it reads: "We explored: how do USA National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded researchers"

Methods

* Please include the inclusion criteria in the article. It is not clear why 193 articles were excluded.

* I’m not sure the word purposive is required in the sentence "We used purposive sampling and sent email invitations to all Phase 1 PIs", as all PIs were emailed not a selection.

Results

* Second sentence doesn't appear accurate, the NIH funded 277 projects and 76 met the inclusion criteria for your study.
Check formatting of headings: line 92 needs a new line and line 117.

The switching of the terms projects and profiles in the second paragraph is confusing. This may be clear for US readers, but would be useful for non-US audience to have the terms defined or if accurate use only projects.

Line 97 "References to sustainability varied" is unclear.

Line 106 "Profiles referred to frameworks" appears to be incomplete sentence. This could be deleted or alternatively reworded.

Line 119 also required rewording "Interviewees described varied sustainability definitions"

I was surprised that nearly all participants described sustainability as the continued delivery of evidence-based intervention implementation efforts. I thought it would have been continued delivery of an evidence-based intervention. Implementation strategies/efforts are often for a defined period of time e.g. 6 to 12 months, and sustainability is if the intervention then continues after this time (along with the other sustainability components). Please ensure this is what was meant…

Check grammar of lines 146-147 and in lines 148-150. In addition, be consistent with "constructs" and "factors", and "barriers"

Lines 171-172. The majority of strategies appear to be directed at all levels of context, where were the others directed? I'm not sure what this sentence is adding.

Line 178 "interviewees who had an interest in sustainability research" How was this assessed? Was it only those with an interest that said their motivation came from…if not remove this part of the sentence.

Discussion

Line 200 use the word "implementation strategies" while in results "implementation efforts". Check throughout and be consistent.

Line 231 - Reference 30 is not in the reference list.

Limitations

Add full-stop after NIH in line 235.

Line 237: beginning of sentence would read better with "For this reason we decided"
* Line 244: "insights are missing" rather than "insights ware missing"

* Line 245: this should be reported in the results.

Conclusion

* The current wording appears more as a summary than a conclusion. I would change the heading or reword.

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Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

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