Author’s response to reviews

Title: The sustainability of public health interventions in schools: a systematic review

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Author’s response to reviews:

Mr Paul Wilson
Professor Michel Wensing
Editors-in-Chief
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10 July 2019

Dear Mr Wilson

Thank you for considering our manuscript “Sustaining public health interventions in schools: a systematic review of facilitators and barriers,” (IMPS-D-19-00331).

In your email on 5th July 2019, you raised an important point in asking us to clarify the nature of the evidence base for the interventions in the review. We agree that it is important that the paper summarises the evidence base for the interventions from their prior evaluations of effectiveness, and assesses the extent to which evidence of effectiveness was influential in whether the interventions were then sustained in schools.

We have revised the manuscript in the following ways:
• P.1-2. We have amended the abstract to include our findings on the relationship between effectiveness and sustainment.
• P.3. We have revised the “Contributions to the literature” section.
• P.6. We have revised the wording of “initial implementation phase” in the method.
• P.8. We have added “and effectiveness” to the results’ section on “intervention characteristics”.
• P.9 We have clarified and added citations to the paragraph explaining how the interventions’ effectiveness was assessed and summarised the results of the evaluations.
• Table 1 now includes the column “Evidence of effects on outcomes” and we have added citations for the effectiveness evaluations. In total, 18 of the studies have accessible evaluations that focused on outcomes. (Please note that due to the cumbersome nature of table formatting, I was not able to make tracked changes, however, I have highlighted the changes in yellow). There is a wider evidence base for some of the interventions, which we refer to where pertinent. For example,
Tjomsland et al 2009 does not have an accessible outcome evaluation for the schools that were studied for sustainability but the Health Promoting Schools approach has a large evidence-base (Langford et al 2014). Similarly, the Good Behaviour Game intervention in Dijkman et al 2017 has been evaluated in a much earlier study (Van Lier et al 2004).

- P.9. We have clarified the language in the results section on “Timeframe examined”.
- P.11. We have referred to evidence of effectiveness and the reporting of sustainment. We have included an additional table – Table 4 – cross-tabulating effectiveness with reported sustainment. (Consequently the previous Table 4 is now Table 5).
- P.13. We have revised the wording referring to implementation.
- P.5. We have noted whether staff referred to the effectiveness evaluation.
- P.19. We have commented on the relationship between evidence of effectiveness and sustainment.
- P. 21. We have added a line relating to effectiveness into the conclusion.
- P. 22. We have added abbreviations to the list from the additions to Table 1.
- P. 27. There are additional references at the end of the manuscript relating to the new citations in Table 1.

We these additions, the word count is now 5780. It will be difficult to return the word count to 5500, but we can attempt this is you require it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

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