Reviewer's report

Title: Stepped wedge randomised controlled trials: systematic review of studies published between 2010 and 2014

Version: 2  Date: 26 March 2015

Reviewer: Richard Lilford

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Major Compulsory Revisions

1. I very much like the classification of interventions building on psychological literature, but how would this accommodate ‘structural’ changes, such as increasing the nurse to patient ratio, or the teacher to pupil ratio. Makes no distinction between targeted and generic interventions [Lilford et al. BMJ. 2010;341:c4413]. To put this another way, behaviour change intervention does not cover all service delivery and policy interventions – see for example, John Lavis’s classification.

2. Asymmetric requirement to report reason for using, but not for not using SWD?

Minor Essential Revisions

n/a

Discretionary Revisions

1. Only one reviewer to identify studies. Oh well, one vigilant reader is better than two sloppy ones.

2. Usual to include some sort of PRISMA diagram, but perhaps not for a methodological review.

3. Graph of use vs. time?

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests