Reviewer's report

Title: Improving Primary care Access in Context and Theory (I-ACT trial): A theory informed randomised cluster feasibility trial using a realist perspective

Version: 0 Date: 15 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Ian Russell

Reviewer's report:

This paper has 3 main components:

(A) Development of 3 interventions to improve access to rural primary care for older patients
This description is flimsy; I doubt whether it would help rural practitioners or researchers in this field.

(B) Cluster randomised feasibility trial to evaluate these 3 interventions against usual care
This trial randomises these 4 interventions between only 4 practices & only 34 patients. It tells us little about the feasibility of a future definitive cluster randomised trial of any combination of the practice-specific interventions under evaluation. Why did the researchers not follow one of several guidelines for pilot & feasibility trials (e.g. Charlesworth et al, 2013)?

(C) Detailed statistical analysis of this trial.
Detailed statistical analysis of this very weak trial can only draw lessons for analysis of a future definitive trial.

To be constructive, the authors may wish to write separate, but more rigorous, papers about A (e.g. for BJGP Open) & B (e.g. for Pilot & Feasibility Studies).

Level of interest
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Statistical review

Is it essential that this manuscript is seen by an expert statistician? If so, please give your reasons in your report.

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