Reviewer’s report

Title: Systematic mapping of checklists for assessing transferability

Version: 0 Date: 06 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Peter Bragge

Reviewer's report:

Overview / General comments

This study makes a very useful contribution to an important area - consideration of transferability of findings of systematic reviews. The search, data extraction, analysis and synthesis have resulted in a comprehensive and list of considerations that have been usefully categorised for practical application.

The main issues to address with this manuscript are not the methods or results but the overarching concepts. There are two issues that need clarification throughout the paper:

* In terms of clarity of purpose, there are some important issues to clarify. Lines 143 - 145: The definition of 'transferability' refers to comparing the context of the review question with the context of the included studies - in this case, the review authors know the setting of all the included studies and are dealing with settings that can be described. Then there is transferability of systematic reviews to the context of the readers of systematic reviews - this is, (in theory) any practice or policy setting, of any size, anywhere in the world. In the introduction and abstract, there is reference to evaluating transferability to 'a local context' - whose local context is this - the review authors, the readers, the decision makers etc.? If the intention is for review authors to consider the information that needs to be included in systematic reviews to enable a reader to evaluate relevance to their own context (which I think is the idea), this needs to be made much clearer at the outset.

1. In terms of clarity of end user, there are many different end-users identified throughout the paper, and it is only when reading the final conclusion that the intended audience for use of the TRANSFER resource, when it is fully developed, is systematic reviewers. This needs to be made much clearer early in the paper. Some examples of the many other groups identified are outlined be section below. In summary, the following groups need to be explicitly defined very
early in the paper (i.e. the introduction) - 'decision makers', 'stakeholders' 'clinician' (doctors, others?)

Comments and edits by section

INTRODUCTION

* Line 57 could also mention the Cochrane Effective Practice and Organisation of Care (EPOC) group - evidence around interventions to implement evidence into clinical practice http://epoc.cochrane.org/

* Define "decision makers" - are these clinicians, healthcare managers, policymakers, all of the above? Earlier it is stated that this includes practitioners but who are the other groups?

* Similarly, 'stakeholders' is not defined. It is important to be specific about the end-user audience, because each end-user group has specific context and different groups would view transferability different ways

* Line 99 discusses relevance of the evidence to the review question - this is different from relevance of the evidence to the local context, which is the stated purpose of the paper. Care should be taken to distinguish between these

* It's also important to bear in mind that SR authors cannot reasonably assess 'relevance' to the many settings in which the review findings could be used

METHOD

* The EQUATOR network is a large repository of checklists for reporting of various types of studies, including systematic reviews and a tool to analyse transferability of health promotion interventions (Cambon, which you have identified). The resources within these checklists could add to those already identified in the systematic review: http://www.equator-network.org/ It may be worth scanning this resource.

* Line 168 - how is 'small part' defined? E.g. less than 20% of the items, only 1 - 2 items …
RESULTS

* The exclusion of checklists pertaining to economic evaluations seems valid, but it would be good to know specifically why these were not considered relevant, perhaps with an example

* Lines 205 - 208 again reinforce the issue of definitions

DISCUSSION

* Lines 341 - 345 again create a bit of confusion about the aims of your review - is the end-user a review author, stakeholder, decision maker, clinician or all of these?

Minor copy edits

* Line 31 replace 'latter group' with 'health and social welfare groups'

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