Reviewer's report

Title: Improving psychosocial health and employment outcomes for individuals receiving methadone treatment: A realist synthesis of what makes interventions work

Version: 3
Date: 2 June 2014

Reviewer: Lynne Williams

Reviewer's report:

I think this is an important paper which addresses a key area relating to the journal's remit.

Minor essential revisions
1. Page 2 abstract - in light of journal's remit, additional research to explore individual influences on engagement may be relevant?
2. Page 1. Line 9. please consider changing 'systematic review' to 'realist review or synthesis' for readability
3. Page 5 Line 100 & P7 Line 150 - explanation of the role of 'grey literature' in realist synthesis may be helpful here
4. Some early introduction to programme theory development in realist synthesis can be helpful around page 5, and would link in to later discussion about candidate theory. Similarly, I think introduction to CMOs would be beneficial around here to reduce leap to concepts in later discussion
5. Page 6 - can you comment re role of stakeholders/experts/reference group in the discussion around research question?
6. Page 6 & 7 - perhaps useful to rationalise why this not rapid realist review in view of two reference to limited time/resources?
7. Page 7 Line 152 - perhaps clarify use of term 'hypothesis' in the context of realist approach - (same point page 10 Line 211).
8. Page 6 - not sure how helpful quotation is p128 as you state studies included were mix of qualitative and quantitative papers.
9. Page 10 Line 215 - do you mean evaluations?
10. I think Table 1 would be usefully placed in text on page 10.
11. Perhaps need to explain why only peer reviewed evaluation studies included in light of realist methodology & rationale for inclusion of different types of evidence that may illuminate CMO configurations?

Level of interest: An article of importance 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