Reviewer's report

Title: "It All Needs To Be A Full Jigsaw, Not Just Bits": Exploration of Healthcare Professionals' Beliefs towards Supported Self-Management for Long-Term Conditions

Version: 1 Date: 31 Mar 2019

Reviewer: Fiona Clague

Reviewer's report:

The authors have conducted an interesting and novel piece of work, that makes a bold attempt to learn about staff attitudes to self management implementation using a theory driven approach. They reflect carefully on the difficulties of gathering data from busy care professionals and I would be willing to recommend acceptance, pending final statistical opinion about the manuscript, mindful of the small sample size and substantial variance within the sample.

Some further brief thoughts to incorporate into the discussion section at the discretion of the authors:

1. I wonder if they have recommendations about methods to improve questionnaire completion adherence or recruitment processes to increase the sample size - was the recruitment method devised via PPI with relevant stakeholders? Do the authors have thoughts on any methodological changes that might have increased their recruitment chances, mindful of the busy lives of the managers/professionals involved? e.g. Would it have been feasible to gather any of the data been gathered face to face during team or key policy meetings etc?

2. I find it interesting that the participants frequently refer to social support and involvement of important others such as managers and GPs - whilst some of their beliefs in relation to this might be perceptual or attitudinally based, I still wonder about pragmatic processes of change resistance and implementation science that might interact with these belief systems, as alluded to in my earlier review comment. I wonder about the importance of developing strategies for both effective top down and bottom up stakeholder engagement at the project outset, that would be likely to increase both perceived and actual sense of social support to an intervention of this nature.
It goes without saying that a complex psychosocial intervention will have minimal likelihood of success without senior health and social care management buy in and support, given the limited resource in these work settings in the first instance and likelihood that the new intervention (at least in the first instance) will require added resource use to become successfully embedded within local systems. I imagine that GP buy in would be particularly essential, given that GPs are the primary coordinators of care between the different self management stakeholders. Therefore I wonder whether participants in future research might have thoughts about what type of engagement strategies or management strategies might be appropriate to involve these "important others" in project planning and delivery, to increase success, and whether indeed these groups need to be research targets in their own right.

Furthermore, I wonder what participants mean by "social support" and whether this would also be an interesting research question to ask, if it was not specified from the participant data. Do they mean having the support of their immediate colleagues (through day to day joint working, allocation of resource and management buy in) and/or intervention specific strategies such as mentorship and supervision from those suitably experienced with the approaches at hand? The idea of hearing ideas from successful earlier projects certainly sounds very helpful, but the larger scale development of sustainable psychosocial interventions often requires ongoing forms of expert support with initial delivery, such that those piloting the intervention can be helped to avert or overcome the inevitable early barriers associated with embedding a significant change to established modes of organisational working.

3. I quite agree with you that it would be interesting to explore some of these implementation and organisational change processes within other theoretical health psychology frameworks - the transtheoretical model being an obvious candidate, given the differing stages of change that many health care or voluntary organisations may be at when it comes to beginning to offer a new model of care.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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Yes

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