Reviewer’s report

Title: Process evaluation of text-based support for fathers during the transition to fatherhood (SMS4dads): mechanisms of impact

Version: 0 Date: 17 Mar 2019

Reviewer: Danielle Gallegos

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this well-written and conceptualised manuscript. It is an elegant piece of research that provides details of a qualitatively informed process evaluation of the SMS intervention. The methods are well-written and there is a well thought out analysis that captures the link between elements of the intervention and psychological processes.

My comments are relatively minor and for clarification purposes:

1. Check for typos throughout the manuscript
   - sentence Background p3: line 48 needs reworking "a meta-analysis rate of 10.4%........ mental health" (not a full sentence and is unclear)
   - p4 line 4 - father's lack of availability to attend clinics and programs - this puts all the onus on the father's and suggests they are not interested in attending - this could be reworded to indicate that often clinics and programs are not scheduled at times and days that enable attendance without disrupting work commitments
   - p 4, line 14 - via mobile phones at more convenient times
   - check for overuse of capitals e.g research assistant, psychology

2. p 4, line 14 - Sentence” there is accumulating evidence...." this needs references

3. Methodology - NVIVO is not an analysis tool but rather a data management tool - suggest entered into NVIVO for data management and subsequent analysis
   - Were the father's given the opportunity to add to or change anything in their transcripts?

4. Results
I am a bit nervous about calling the results "outcomes" this implies some sort of measurement - was this the case in the feasibility study? Is this referring to changes in the DASS and Audit C or Kessler? Perhaps consider a difference word to "outcomes" and/or softening the language e.g potentially contributing to positive and then be explicit (positive mood, role construction etc)

I would like to see the figure be a little more explicit - what is the connection between the structural features and psychological processes? Currently the arrow for the program is pointing away from the outcomes. Consider whether you need the figure at all of if the structural features and psychological processes can be summarised in a table

5. Discussion/limitations

It would be good to have some discussion on literacy (both reading/writing and health) - the intervention assumes a base level of both and this is potentially a limitation.

6. Conclusion

The conclusion has a number of reference to "we" - we also... we emphasise... our study - this language has not been used throughout and so perhaps changing to "the study"

Table 1

Only one decimal place for mean age

References

- formatting needs to be checked against journal guidelines (in particular capitalisation of journal names)

**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?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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