Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Optimising the acceptability and feasibility of novel complex interventions: an iterative, person-based approach to developing the UK Morita Therapy outpatient protocol

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 13 Sep 2016

**Reviewer:** Christine Bond

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I think this is an interesting description of the development stages undertaken prior to conducting a feasibility study of an intervention.

However at the moment it feels very long and I think it would benefit from restructuring such that all the methods are together followed by the Results. It reads as three disconnected studies rather than an iterative integrated approach based on the MRC framework. I also think that in some places the writing could be condensed more/written more tightly to reduce overall word length. Whilst overall English is good some sentences need rewording for clarity.

I am afraid that, despite the authors' claims, there is nothing novel here, as currently articulated in the paper. It feels as though the MRC guidance has been well followed but this is but one of many examples of that. It is good practice but not anything new.

There are also some small inconsistencies across the paper - for example it is unclear to what extent the 4th stage included development and/or delivery of the training, and how the findings informed training. Thinking of the systematic approach to developing training, there should be agreed learning objectives based on a needs assessment (which has by implication been done albeit on a very sample) and then thinking of the best way for people to learn about these objectives and potentially be assessed on them. For a subsequent stage of a feasibility study, fidelity to the intervention (which would be dependent to some extent on the quality of the training), would be key.

As a small point there also should be consistency in use of terms feasibility and pilot which appear to be used interchangeably.

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