Author’s response to reviews

Title: Adolescents and health-related behaviour: using a framework to develop interventions to support positive behaviours

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Author responses to reviewer reports:

Reviewer #1: A really good article. One small point would be to include examples and/or references in the lines below:

Page 8 line 30 "In addition, we also aimed to take into consideration the specific neurological changes that happen during adolescence..." perhaps insert a couple of examples here of specific neurological changes

We have given referenced examples

Page 16 line 38 "Their assistance may be vital to pupils, especially in challenging situations..." perhaps insert a couple of examples of perceived challenging situation

We have given referenced examples. We appreciate these suggestions

Reviewer #2: The methodology implemented in this article can be used for a wide range of studies, however this article is too long.
1) There is lot of redundant information in the text and the tables. Some of the tables can be omitted. The paper has been shortened and 4 tables, plus one figure omitted. We think this has helped make the paper more succinct. Thank you

2) What are the limitations of this method?

A very valid point. Further information has been given in the discussion section

Editorial comments:

Abstract:

In the abstract, please delete or rephrase this sentence, as its value is not obvious: “A recent review concluded that, due to their influence on health behaviour, physiological changes that occur during adolescence need to be considered when designing or implementing interventions to improve adolescent health outcomes.”

This has been altered

Shorten the background and state the objectives of this study. Also state if the same team conducted the review above.

These points have been addressed by a revision of the abstract

The methods section does not report an actual methodology. Please report one.

As above - we have altered the abstract

Background:

The first sentence here is the same as in the abstract. Please revise.

This has been revised

“Recently, we conducted a systematic review..” who is we? The following statement should start with: “We found that…”

We have made this more explicit, and altered the wording

At the end of page 4, you refer to the Medical Research Council. Please rewrite this and consider an international audience.
This is a very valid point. We have included an international reference and altered the wording

This section is quite long, in part because you try to summarise the results of your review here. If the review is critical to this work, it might fit better in the methodology section. You could also summarise the results of the review in a table.

A helpful suggestion – thank you. Since the findings from the review are essential to informing the intervention, we have retained them, but in tabulated form (see Table2)

This section ends with no objectives stated.

Aims and objectives are now included

Methods:

Only here do we see objectives, but they are reported under the application of 6SQuID. The terms used in reporting the objectives are very vague: “to examine”, and “to consider”. These really give no indication of what you plan to do.

We have added additional detail to address these points

“We identified a means of testing the intervention in a small pilot study. We used the information from Step 4 to suggest recruitment of appropriate samples of the target group(s), as well as determining the setting, timing, and other operational matters”. What are these operational matters.

The revisions to reduce the length of the paper have resulted in this part being deleted

What you describe as individual steps are actually results (So include a results section). These stem from a process which is not described at all. It is unclear who did what and how? Did one person apply the framework to the findings of the review? Was this a deliberative process? Were points raised in duplicate? How were disagreements resolved? What resources were required to do this? What expertise is required? There is insufficient detail to replicate this work.

We have now detailed the method and process, and given a results section

Discussion & Conclusion:

As a consequence of the above, the discussion and conclusions do not tie with what is reported above. The example used in this paper does not give an adequate illustration of what should be done to develop an adolescent intervention. Many of the figures and tables could be omitted. For example, figures 3 and 4; the 6SQuID step tables.
Hopefully the revisions have resolved these issues. We have omitted 4 Tables and one figure, making the paper more succinct and explicit. We have retained the table relating to the 6 SQuID steps because we felt some readers might not be familiar with the content. However, other superfluous information has been removed, making it hopefully more appropriate to retain the table.

In summary, there is no clear design, it’s a bit long and the humans behind the work are missing from the story.

We appreciate the above suggestions. We hope we have addressed these points in a satisfactory manner, by making the design clearer, and shortening the paper. We would like to thank the reviewers and editor for their comments, which have undoubtedly improved the paper. In the revised version we have highlighted changes in red print for ease of reference.