**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** Technology-based functional assessment in early intervention: A pilot study

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 10 Nov 2017

**Reviewer:** Tracey-Lee Cloete

**Reviewer’s report:**

Manuscript title: Technology-based functional assessment in early intervention: A pilot study (PAFS-D-17-00113)

Feedback to Author/s

General impression

This work aims to evaluate the feasibility and utility of obtaining family input about child functioning for the purpose of outcomes monitoring. The authors have presented a protocol for a pilot study to determine the feasibility of implementing technology-based functional assessment into early intervention (EI) practice to obtain family input. This pilot study places sufficient emphasis on the assessment of feasibility issues, which is not only informative to the researchers conducting this study but also to others doing similar work. The authors have provided clear feasibility outcomes and implications for progression from the pilot to the definitive study. Generally, a well-written and coherent paper with minor omissions and editorial issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line Number/Section</th>
<th>Specific comment/issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Clear identification as pilot study in title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract and keywords</td>
<td>Structured summary of method, results and interpretation of results. However, description of pilot study design unclear and implications for future definitive study only partially mentioned. Suggest that some of the main implications are noted in abstract. Perhaps reflect the focus on &quot;technology-based assessment&quot; in the keywords.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. 6, line 169</td>
<td>Include NINDS in Abbreviations list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Background and rationale for the study is clearly presented. However, rationale for E-PROs in general could be strengthened. If one considers accessibility issues (e.g.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
access to PCs) and the fact that self-reported information may not always be comparable to EI providers' observation of functioning, the researchers must clearly describe the benefits of using e-PROs despite these challenges.

Methods

p.8, line 2013  
Include a brief description of EI providers.

Participant recruitment and consent  
Authors need to provide a clearer explanation of recruitment process, how informed consent was managed, given the feasibility nature of the study. According to Thabane et al. (2010), the informed consent process must include disclosure of purpose of the study, feasibility objectives as well as an explanation of the criteria for success of feasibility.

Measures

p. 8, line 221-224  
For predetermined criteria to judge feasibility, the criteria mentioned here seems to focus more on providers' perspective only - i.e. providers' ability to screen and enrol eligible families. Would strengthen findings if participants' perspective is also considered under criteria for feasibility. In Discussion section (p.15) "reasons for study decline" are briefly explored and provides some additional insight.

General protocol/procedure  
The protocol for the study is described in adequate detail. Additionally, authors should include:

- Rationale for participant numbers in pilot study
- Focus group discussion schedule should be carefully considered and link to predetermined criteria used to judge feasibility
Data analysis

Data analysis for focus group discussion not clearly described.

Results

Authors include clear description of how findings will be used to inform the definitive study and the changes to study protocol following the pilot.

Discussion

Limitations are clearly stated, sources of potential bias are considered and authors propose strategies to address these in definitive study. It’s important to address the cultural diversity issue raised in the discussion to increase enrolment and generalizability of results. Interpretation consistent with objectives and results.

References:


Level of interest

Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English

Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests

Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?
3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal