Author’s response to reviews

Title: Enabling Aboriginal dental assistants to apply fluoride varnish for school-children in communities with a high Aboriginal population in New South Wales, Australia: A study protocol for a feasibility study

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Author’s response to reviews:

Thank you for the opportunity to revise this manuscript again.

My responses to the Editor's comments are below:

1. Please make clear in the title that this is a protocol for a feasibility study eg '....study protocol for a feasibility study'. This has been added

2. Abstract: Please make clear what the feasibility objectives are for this study at the end of the background. A main study would test efficacy, but a pilot study has feasibility objectives which consider any uncertainties in the methodology. For example are you testing the feasibility of implementing the pathway in some way? The primary objective of this study...
has been specified in the abstract. The aim is to evaluate feasibility and acceptability of utilising Aboriginal dental assistants to apply fluoride varnish to Aboriginal school-children in a school setting at regular three-month intervals.

3. Please add a list of feasibility objectives to the end of the introduction also giving more detail than in the abstract. The feasibility objectives of this study have been added to the end of the introduction at line 174.

4. Methods: please separate the methods into appropriate subheadings eg. study design, setting (inc ethical approval), recruitment of participants, inclusion/exclusion criteria, description of intervention, sample size, data analysis etc. and ensure sufficient detail is given under each to describe the methods clearly. Please ensure the methods are given and align with how each feasibility objective is to be addressed. Subheadings have been added. Throughout the methodology and specifically under the subheading ‘data analysis’ it is clearly demonstrated how the methods align with how the feasibility objectives will be addressed.

5. Please ensure there is a clear rationale for the chosen sample size to justify its choice (even if no formal calculation is done). A clear rationale for the chosen sample size has been provided in line 231. This study aims to recruit 500 Aboriginal children which represents 1% of Aboriginal children enrolled in public schools in NSW.

6. Please give enough description of the data analysis methods to be adopted. It is recommended in the CONSORT extension guideline that methods should mainly be descriptive summaries and results presented with 95% CIs. More information has been provided in the data analysis methods and we have included that results will be presented with 95%CIs. Please see line 319.

7. Please ensure the discussion addresses what future plans there are following this pilot study and any implications for the work. The future plans of this work have been included in the Discussion line 339.