



Abstract Template

Project title

Understanding fidelity within trials of complex healthcare interventions: A systematic review of existing intervention fidelity frameworks, models and tools (protocol)

Institution

Health Behaviour Change Research Group, School of Psychology, National University of Ireland Galway

Project details (max 250 words)

Intervention fidelity refers to the degree to which an intervention is implemented as intended by its developers, and is crucial to facilitate accurate interpretation of trial outcomes across all areas of healthcare¹. Without adequate assessment and reporting of fidelity, we cannot be certain that changes in trial outcomes are due to the intervention being investigated and not due to variability in its implementation².

Despite its importance, fidelity is continually poorly assessed and reported in trials of complex healthcare interventions³. Findings of a recent international survey showed that the lack of clarity regarding intervention fidelity terminology, definitions and components is one of the most significant barriers faced by researchers and triallists to addressing fidelity within trials of complex healthcare interventions⁴. The survey identified 15 different fidelity frameworks/tools utilising inconsistent definitions and terminologies, of which only 26.4% of participants had previously used. The study subsequently highlighted a need for practical guidance to improve understanding and use of existing frameworks/tools.

The aim of this project is to develop a protocol for a comprehensive systematic review of existing intervention fidelity frameworks, models and tools. This review will synthesise and categorise this information to enable clarity around definitions, terminology, and components, and to provide practical guidance to facilitate the appropriate selection and application of relevant frameworks for trials of healthcare interventions, from study design to reporting. This project will contribute to an ongoing body of work led by the project contact (ET) aiming to improve how intervention fidelity is addressed within trials of complex healthcare interventions.

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References

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4. McGee, D., Lorencatto, F., Matvienko-Sikar, K. and Toomey, E. (2018) 'Surveying knowledge, practice and attitudes toward intervention fidelity within trials of complex healthcare interventions', under review in *Trials*.