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“Developing new methods to evaluate complex health interventions: analysing context, texts and disruptions”

Seminar Presentation

Well-established theoretical models and methods are available for evaluating the implementation and sustainability of complex healthcare interventions, including widespread recognition of the importance of accounting for context-intervention-outcome interactions within such investigations. However, there is a need to translate conceptualisations of context into analytical tools which enable the dynamic relationship between context and intervention implementation to be captured and understood. In this seminar, I will draw on theoretical perspectives associated with Linguistic Ethnography (LE), which provides theoretical and methodological tools for a close investigation of social action in context. Using LE, I will propose an alternative approach to the investigation of intervention delivery within context, through a consideration of texts, distributed and enacted at multiple contextual levels. As an example, I will share data from PACK Child, a pilot study of a paediatric primary care intervention currently being delivered in South Africa. Using observational field notes, audio recordings and transcriptions of nurse-patient consultations, I will discuss the enactment of the PACK Child guide, a set of clinical guidelines used by nurses when consulting caregivers and children. I will examine how staff orientate to the guide as one of several standardised texts in play at the point of intervention delivery, to illustrate how such observations are not solely premised on identifying routines or practices of implementation, but where ‘interventions as intended’ are disrupted, or break down. In doing so, I consider what can be gained from tracking the circulation of different texts across different levels of context, including how we might expose the ‘active ingredients’ of interventions to empirical observation.

Brief Biography

Jamie works as a Research Fellow in Process Evaluation Methodology at the School of Health Sciences and Norwich Medical School at the University of East Anglia. He is Process Evaluation Lead for the Norwich Clinical Trials Unit and oversees process evaluation design across a range of health service research projects, using quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods to conduct such investigations. He also works closely with the Knowledge Translation Unit at Cape Town University, overseeing the process evaluation of two complex healthcare interventions: 1) PACK Child - a paediatric primary care guideline and systems strengthening intervention; and 2) ASSET - a study of person-centred TB care for providers, patients and households in South Africa. Jamie has a particular interest in how to study the contexts in which healthcare interventions are delivered, and in particular, the contribution of linguistic ethnographic methods to conduct such investigations.

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