

Reviewer's report

Title: Community health intervention research: Is reporting on interventions a weak link?

Version: 1 Date: 27 March 2007

Reviewer: Sally Green

Reviewer's report:

General'

This is an interesting paper and reports a useful framework for thinking about the design and reporting of complex/ 'multiple' interventions, both in community health research and other areas of research into bringing about practice change. However, I believe the work requires more data to be considered for publication.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

It would be helpful to give more description and justification as to how the nine propositions for community health intervention research were developed and selected. They are sensible and appear to be based on 'theoretical and empirical literature', and the authors' experience, but the paper would be strengthened by expanding this section to outline the process and methods for developing, refining and agreeing these propositions.

My major concern about this paper is the size of the sample. I think it is interesting and valuable early work which should be further developed, but believe a sample of 3 programs (nine papers and one book) is too small to base conclusions on, and potentially too small to publish. I think the work should be expanded to at least extract data from all reports in one area of health care (eg heart health). Despite reporting the paper as a pilot study, the authors have drawn conclusions and made recommendations on this very small sample.

Finally it seems that 3 teams of 2 independent reviewers extracted the data from the papers. Given the number of reviewers and complexity of the information being extracted, some reporting of the reliability of this process would be helpful.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.