

Reviewer's report

Title: A critical review of the research literature on Six Sigma, Lean & StuderGroup's Hardwiring Excellence: the need to demonstrate and communicate the effectiveness of transformation strategies in healthcare

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Reviewer: Anthony R Kovner

Reviewer's report:

The article is a useful guide to this literature.

- 1 The question posed by the authors is new and well defined.
- 2 Methods are appropriate and well described.
- 3 Data are sound and well controlled
- 4 Manuscript adheres to relevant standards for reporting and data deposition
- 5 Discussion and conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported by the data.
- 6 Title and Abstract conveys adequately what has been found.
- 7 The writing is acceptable.

Discretionary Revisions

1 What do the findings mean, given the methodological limitations in the studies reviewed that might undermine the validity of the results?

Management research is tremendously underfunded. The purpose of this research is not to prove hypotheses but rather to improve the quality of managerial decision-making. To what extent can any of these studies be useful in what ways to give managers better evidence for managerial interventions.

2 By the way, the cost of the transformational strategies is ignored in the research reviewed and in the analysis.

3 I judge most of the authors' recommendations (e.g. academic partnerships, research administrators) not easily feasible. Health care organizations and systems generally don't wish to fund management research (although they would be the chief beneficiaries of management research). Government doesn't place a high priority on

this kind of research either.

Other comments:

1 The article raises solid substantial methodological questions about the literature reviewed.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests.