Reviewer’s report

Title: Quantitative measurement of the utilization of research by Dutch local health officials

Version: 1 Date: 20 February 2011

Reviewer: Mathieu Ouimet

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions:

- You should use a ordered logistic (or probit) regression to model instrumental use (rather than the OLS).

- It would be a better approach to include all variables in a multiple regression model. Even if some variables are not significantly associated with the outcomes (using univariate analysis), they could be important control variable in the model.

- There is an option you might want to use in SPSS, that is « Alpha if item deleted ». Using this tool, you can see what would be the Alpha (Cronbach) value if you use two rather than 3 items, etc.

- Page 9, lines 244 – « Correlated variables (based on p<0.05) were then combined into one variable » - What do you mean? Items? Which variables were combined?

- It would be of high interest to assess the magnitude of the regression parameters (for example, see Ouimet et al., Evidence & Policy, 2010). Very easy to do.

Minor Essential Revisions:

- Page 4, Lines 92-95 – Interactions can also be direct, informal interactions with researchers who are not involved in the policy-making process.

- Page 5, Lines 140 – why just one recall?

- Page 9, lines 250-255 – the response rate should be calculated like this: 172 completed questionnaires divided by 339 approached officials = 51% (and not 84%). Line 315, you disclose a 50% response rate.

- Page 11-12, lines 319-321 – the Cronbach’s Alpha does not tell us whether the items measure the same concept. If you want to verify this, you should run an exploratory factorial analysis (although I am not requiring you do so).

- The Innvaer et al. 2002 systematic review is quoted, but not the one of Lavis et al. (2005). Mitton et al. (2007) also published a synthesis in Milbank.
- The officials (policy-makers) surveyed in this study could have been more precisely described. What are their formal rank? (e.g. directors, general directors, policy analysts, etc.).

- I really don’t like the Tables (the way they look).

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests