Reviewer’s report

Title: Process evaluation of a community-based adolescent obesity prevention project in Tonga.

Version: 1 Date: 15 November 2010

Reviewer: Jennifer Yost

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. Formal evaluation of interventions, especially in public health, are certainly necessary to continue “what works” when implementing interventions.

In addition to the Major Compulsory Revisions below, additional comments are included in the attached file.

Major Compulsory Revisions

Overall Manuscript

• The question posed by the authors is not well defined. The authors are indeed clear that this is a process evaluation, however they do not provide the questions they are seeking to answer with this process evaluation.

• The authors state in the Abstract that “process evaluation data … were collected and analyzed by dose, frequency, and reach for specific strategies”. However, this data is not formally addressed in the manuscript. In addition to data on the dose, frequency, and reach – data on fidelity should also be reported. It is recommended that the authors review relevant evaluation frameworks, such as the Centers for Disease Control or the RE-AIM framework.

Methods

• The methods for evaluation are not well defined. The authors need to provide a more detailed description of what evaluation data was collected, how evaluation data was collected (including reliability and validity of instruments), who collected the evaluation data, when the evaluation data was collected. References included by the authors (e.g. Curran et al. and Rosecrans et al.) provide good examples in table format.

Results

• Data on dose, frequency, and reach should be reported for each of the objectives. The authors should review references they provided for ways to strengthen the reporting of the Results section. For example, the Rosecrans et al. reference provides a framework for reporting that would strengthen this manuscript. The majority of information provided in the Results section could be moved to the Discussion section to explain/discuss the Results.

• In the description of “Nutrition”, (b) Activities and (c) Programs appear to be
similar. What is the difference?

Discussion

• The Discussion section appears disjointed from the Results section. The authors state the purpose of the Discussion section is “In this section, the program is discussed using the set of best practice principles ...”. Typically the Discussion section is used to explain/discuss the Results section. The authors should use the Discussion section to explain the Results section (a lot of the information in the Results section should be moved to the Discussion section). In addition, comparison to evaluation data from similar projects would be helpful.

• Although limitations of the process evaluation are mentioned here and there in the Results section, there should be a dedicated paragraph or two discussing the limitations of the process evaluation in the Discussion section.

• The Discussion section should also include a summary of recommendations for improvement of the process evaluation and/or lessons learned from the process evaluation.

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.