Reviewer's report

Title: Missing and accounted for: Gaps and areas of wealth in the public health review literature

Version: 2 Date: 12 June 2011

Reviewer: Ross C Brownson

Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

As this paper is set up, there are a few issues worth consideration.
1. I would like to see more discussion of how health-evidence.ca is marketed as that may influence the sample (registered users) for the current study.
2. I also felt the MS could use a better limitations section; pointing out the limitations in the study.
3. There is quite a bit of variation in the literature on what constitutes a systematic review (e.g., how transparent and clear are decision rules). Since the SR is essential to this study, is there a consistent definition or is it self-defined by the author/sponsor of the SR?
4. I thought the section on Methodological Quality on page 14 was too brief. I would like to see more details here on what leads to a lower quality SR, which could lead to later recommendations on how these could be improved.

- Minor Essential Revisions

1. One citation is listed twice (#1 and #21).
2. For citation #23, there is now a 2nd edition and citation could be changed to list it:
3. There is growing interest in the importance of external validity in a particular body of literature. For example:
   It would be helpful to have some discussion on this topic as for those using a particular SR in practice, information on external validity is essential.
4. It would be helpful to have a table showing the key characteristics of registered users of health-evidence.ca, assuming this is available. How do these compare to users of other sites, such as the US Community Guide? This information may not be available but if it is, it would be useful to readers.
1. The following paper might be of interest as it points to the limited role of the fugitive literature in informing a SR:


2. For your discussion, do you see any role for so called “realist reviews”? For example:


**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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' below.