Reviewer's report

Title: The effects of an intervention program for promoting interorganizational network building between multidisciplinary agencies and community-based organizations: a cluster trial in Japan

Version: 2 Date: 7 November 2011

Reviewer: Vanessa Rose

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Power calculations should be included in the methods section. This will assist in determining whether the study has sufficient power to adequately test hypotheses. If there is insufficient power, the authors should consider a reduction in the scope of the paper.

Minor Essential Revisions

2. CBO should be spelled out in first use in the results section of the abstract

3. The use of social cognitive theory to shape the context of the intervention (p.6) is interesting and to my knowledge, has not been used in this area before. This is perhaps why the explanation of its use is a little clumsy. This section can be clarified by, for example, stating that the personal factor refers to individual staff knowledge and attitudes to interorganizational network building rather than the expertise of the CCSC as a whole and providing concrete examples of the behavioral (e.g. provision of joint care, meetings) and environmental (e.g. local policy and training to support collaboration) factors.

4. Hypothesis 2 (pp.6-7) also requires clarification because it is not clear why training one staff member in interorganizational network building skills will necessarily have a positive impact on all staff. Explaining reciprocal determinism in more practical detail (as suggested above) will help to draw out and make these hypothesized links explicit.

5. An intervention program would best have included staff form both CCSCs and CBOs. Interorganizational networks require collaboration from both sides if they are to be effective. This should be recognized as a limitation of the current intervention and a potential focus for ongoing intervention development.

Discretionary Revisions

6. It could be useful to include how staff was selected for training. Did they self-select? Or did their managers choose them?

7. Why did the control group CCSCs choose not to participate? This again may be useful for future trials.
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 declare that I have no competing interests