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: 3 Date: 9 February 2012

Reviewer: Upali W. Jayasinghe

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

The authors have addressed most of the issues. However, they have not fully addressed or not clearly explained the issue on using categorical variables as predictors.

Page 9, third paragraph: “The first hypothesis was tested by comparing the outcomes from the three groups (1 = program attendees in the intervention group; 2 = program non-attendees in the intervention group; 0 = the control group).”

It would be meaningless to use a variable in this form as a predictor because the size of the numbers does not represent the amount of group characteristic/effect. However, it is possible to capture all of the predictive information in the three groups by using 2 new variables. For example, Attendees (1 = program attendees in the intervention group, 0 = otherwise) and Non_attendees (1 = program non-attendees in the intervention group, 0 = otherwise). By including these two variables in the model authors can compare Attendees with Control group (reference or variable not in the model) and Non-attendees with control group. Authors can make other comparisons by changing the reference variable.

Page 13, second paragraph: Similarly, authors should create new variables for other independent variables included in the model. For example, Male (1=male, 0=female) and two new variable for 3 education levels etc.

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'