Reviewer's report

Title: Priorities for Research in Child Maltreatment, Intimate Partner Violence and Resilience to Violence Exposures: Results of an International Delphi Consensus Development Process

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Reviewer: Ian Pike

Reviewer's report:

This paper describes the process of consensus building carried out by The Preventing Violence Across the Lifespan (PreVAiL) Research Network to identify evidence-based research priorities in intimate partner violence (IPV) and child maltreatment (CM), with a focus on resilience, using a modified Delphi consensus development process. The Preventing Violence Across the Lifespan (PreVAiL) Research Network is a multi-disciplinary, highly-accomplished team, well qualified to undertake this research.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) and child maltreatment (CM) are significant public health problems. The authors aim to address the problem and a stated paucity of research evidence about effective interventions for family violence, and specifically interventions that focus on resilience, by positioning this study to connect investigators in mental health and addictions, CM and IPV to collaborate to develop and test approaches to reduce violence and associated impairment.

The utilization of the modified Delphi process is appropriate to this study. The Delphi process is a widely accepted method for gathering information and data from expert respondents. The process uses a series of questionnaires using multiple iterations to collect information and data, and aims to achieve consensus on a specific issue. It has been used previously for priority setting, program planning and needs assessment.

Caution is required as subject selection, time frames for conducting and completing a study, the possibility of low response rates (e.g. Some members commented that they did not consider themselves qualified to rank priorities in certain categories, therefore “opt out” response options...), and unintentionally guiding feedback from the respondent group are areas where the process can be biased. The authors in this study have acknowledged these limitations and taken steps in the design and implementation to address each as fully as possible.

Overall, this is a well-conceived and conducted study that addresses a key public health concern. The authors provide a clear, concise and detailed description of the modified Delphi process, the methods, procedures and steps used in the process of building consensus. The results reveal the need to examine key elements of promising or successful RES, CM and IPV programmes in order to build and test interventions. In the RM category, the top priority to investigate methods for collecting and collating datasets to link data and to conduct pooled,
meta- and sub-group analyses to identify promising interventions will, in the estimation of this reviewer, make a valuable contribution to improve understanding of where to intervene to reduce the burden of CM and IPV, particularly among more vulnerable populations.

This manuscript makes a valuable contribution to understanding the research and real-life priorities and potential ways forward to address CM and IPV with a focus on RES. This reviewer recommends publication of this manuscript with the following discretionary revision, which may be helpful to the reader:

1) Additional explanation and rationale to support how and why the 5 priority areas were identified.
   a) It may seem more logical to some to combine the RM with the CC category due to the cross-cutting nature of RM.
   b) It may be a challenge to draw a clear distinction between RES and CM and IPV, because RES is one of the major focuses for interventions addressing CM and IPV.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance 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