Reviewer’s report

Title: Intersectional Action for Health Equity: a rapid systematic review

Version: 2 Date: 12 August 2013

Reviewer: Marilyn Wise

Reviewer’s report:

Each of the comments below is minor essential.

The authors have mis-read my question re the use of the word 'Intersectional' in the title - I think the word should be 'intersectoral' instead. There is no further mention of 'intersectional' in the article.

Paragraph One of the Abstract, line 2. The sentence beginning 'Social determinants of health lie outside the sphere of the health sector' should read 'Most of the social determinants of health lie outside the direct mandate of the health sector, making collaboration between government, non-government and private sector organisations beyond the health sector necessary to develop policies and programs to contribute to health equity.'

Delete the sentence on page 5 beginning 'this review examines the question... it repeats the earlier sentence.

The first sentence under the heading 'Interventions' on page 7 needs to be checked - it seems that there are some missing words and the tense needs to be changed from present to past (i.e. from 'are' to 'were') to make it consistent with the earlier and later text.

Discussion. It is not true that the ultimate goal of all intersectoral action for the social determinants of health is to improve health equity. The articles included in this study were screened to include only studies that had been focused on equity - but remember that an initial search located more than 10,000 potential articles and even when much stricter screening was done, more than 880 articles were included. In the end, though, only 17 articles were included in your study - because you were focused only on studies that had evaluated the impact or effectiveness of intersectoral action to improve health equity. Presumably all the other articles were focused on the social determinants of health and intersectoral action in some way - but not, necessarily, on health equity.

The first sentence in paragraph two of the Discussion begins awkwardly. It's not clear whether there is a word or number missing or whether the sentence needs to be rephrased completely.

Although each of the dot points in the list of 'implications for practice and policy' are interesting they do not arise from the systematic review - at least not obviously. The dot points about 'implications for research' on the other hand, do
arise from the systematic review although it would be useful to make that connection more explicit.

I suggest moving the final paragraph beginning 'the strongest effects were observed' up to become the second paragraph in the Discussion.

I suggest revising the 'implications for practice and policy dot points' - or reframing them not as 'arising from the review' but rather, as explanations/advocacy as to why it is important to do the research you've recommended.

This version of the paper is much improved. It does, though, need a little more work before it is ready for publication.

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

**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.