Reviewer’s report

Title: A Systematic Review of Suicide Prevention Interventions targeting Indigenous peoples in Australia, United States, Canada and New Zealand.

Version: 2 Date: 29 November 2012

Reviewer: Jillian (Jill) Guthrie

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A systematic review of suicide prevention interventions targeting Indigenous peoples in Asutralia, United States, Canada and New Zealand.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?

Yes, the question is well defined.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?

Yes, the methods are appropriate and generally very well described. There are a few exceptions which I suggest may be described a little better:

Page 6: last paragraph of Background – PRISMA – reference please.

Page 8: Step 2: Classification of studies – It stages that step 2 resulted in ‘38 intervention studies for further examination’. It is unclear as to whether those 38 comprised the n=38 from (i) Intervention studies’ earlier described in that paragraph, or comprised some of those 38 and some of the n=4 from (ii) Reviews. It seems strangely coincidental that Step 2 (i) resulted in n=38, and Step 3 also resulted in n=38!! It is suggested therefore that how the 38 in Step 3 are comprised should be spelled out better.

Also in Step 3: Identification of intervention evaluations – currently it reads ‘The journal article of intervention studies ....’. Should this say, ‘The full texts of journal articles meeting step 2 were examined ....’?

The last sentence of Step 3 states, “Step 3 identified 9 intervention evaluations for methodological review [32-41]. Counting the numbers 32 to 41 inclusively would suggest that 10 studies met the criteria. This is again suggested on page 10 in the first sentence under the sub-heading Intervention Strategies, where references are included: ie, [37, 38, 40, 41]; [33-36]; [32, 39].

My guess is that a tenth article was found to meet the criteria, but previous iterations had found only nine, but this arithmetical adjustment was not made throughout the whole manuscript.

Page 11: sub-heading Education. This paragraph reports on four studies, whereas the introductory sentence on page 10 (as indicated in my preceding sentence) references only two studies. This inconsistency should be remedied.
Page 14: Heading, Effectiveness of Intervention. This sentence begins, ‘Due to methodological deficiencies …’. I wonder whether a better word would be ‘differences’ rather than ‘deficiencies’ as deficiencies seems more value-laden, and we are not made aware through the literature review of any of the limitations or constraints that were placed on the studies being critiqued.

Also in that paragraph, six line down, the sentence begins, ‘For education interventions, …’. This sentence seems to be contradictory: it mentions ‘statistically significant improvements …’ but at the end of the sentence states, ‘although these were not significant’. This needs consideration.

Page 15: Sub-headings, Methodological adequacy of intervention evaluations, and strengths and limitations of intervention evaluations – these are more appropriate placed within the Results section of the article than Discussion, being critiquing of the reviewed articles.

Throughout these two paragraphs, for consistency, it would be necessary to add in references after each point being made, eg, on page 15 - ‘Five of the nine intervention evaluations were conducted in the US [?, ?, ?, ?, ?]; on page 16 – ‘Seven of the nine studies targeted Indigenous people [?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?]; ‘…. Only one … measured the impact of an intervention on suicide-specific outcomes [?]. (Bearing in mind the above query that the 9 is in fact 10!)

The sub-headings, Potential limitations of the review and Implications of suicide prevention in Indigenous communities, I suggest belong in the Discussion, perhaps in reverse order.

3. Are the data sound?
Yes, as set by the literature search criteria.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
Please see my suggestions at point No 2, regarding paragraphs currently appearing in Discussion which are perhaps better described as Results.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
Yes, but again please see my suggestion at Point 2 regarding ordering of paragraphs in Discussion.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
Yes.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Yes, with editorial amendments as suggested.

9. Is the writing acceptable?
Yes, with editorial amendments as suggested.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.