Reviewer's report

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

Version: 7 Date: 2 February 2013

Reviewer: William E Hartmann

Reviewer's report:

Dear editor and authors,

This manuscript is much improved from its earlier draft. I like the way the authors have emphasized the importance of grappling with suicide in indigenous communities while still acknowledging heterogeneity across communities in degree of severity. I also like how the authors have provided more of a rationale as to why we might think intervention work in one of these indigenous communities might hold insight into work in another, although more could be said. I also appreciate how what is uniquely "indigenous" about this knowledge is more clearly highlighted and parallels and divergences from research with non-Native populations.

Major compulsory revisions:

p.15 This first paragraph in the discussion section solely focuses on the interests and capabilities of the researcher. What about the interests and capabilities of indigenous communities and funding agencies? As is, this article situates the researcher at the center of the research endeavor, which precludes meaningful collaboration with indigenous communities. A lot of the language in the paper should be shifted to avoid this attentional bias.

p.18 The authors jump to the conclusion that tailoring evidence-based interventions is the solution to a lack of evidence as to what works in indigenous communities without explaining this leap. This rout toward tailoring could certainly be fruitful, but it's not the only rout forward (e.g. perhaps evaluate local healing practices). Given the mixed evidence around the effectiveness of cultural tailoring as an approach to meeting the mental health needs of cultural minority communities, at a minimum please qualify this suggestion as "cultural tailoring of evidence-based interventions may be one productive route forward in attempting to address problems of suicide in these indigenous communities." Also, please cite evidence in support of this approach.

p.18 "to confidently allow prescriptive determination of suicide prevention... for these populations"? I'm not sure there's sufficient evidence in any populations to proscribe what suicide prevention program a community should engage in, and I'm not sure this is a practical goal. Community work involves mutual input between interventionists and community collaborators, and this language of proscribing suicide prevention programming for indigenous communities is
problematic. Simply rewording this bit would be sufficient.

p.19 Although you have mentioned that "it's possible the review did not locate all relevant studies," this is an understatement. Something along the lines of "it is highly possible/likely that relevant studies were not included in this review due to less than optimal search terms." Given my point in the original review that it's likely this review caught less than half of the relevant literature, I think specifying the inadequacy of the search strategy is essential to avoid misleading readers less familiar with this area of study.

Minor essential revisions:
P.15 Change “too difficult” to something like “a formidable challenge” to avoid implying that systematic evals in indigenous intervention work is impossible.

Discretionary revisions: None

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

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.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests