Reviewer's report

Title: The impact of Fogarty International Center research training programs on public health policy and program development in Kenya and Uganda

Version: 2 Date: 9 April 2013

Reviewer: Erica Gadsby

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
None.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Methods section, paragraph 2, 2nd bullet point: needs a new sentence at ‘The last set of questions...’.
2. Methods section, last paragraph: last two words ‘The research’ needs to be removed.
3. Discussion section, 2nd paragraph, line 13: ‘provided’ should read ‘providing’.

Discretionary Revisions
4. I didn’t feel the use of focus group discussions was particularly well justified. Were they mainly a vehicle for the structured questionnaire? More information on both the purpose of the FGDs (over and above the interviews) and the structured questionnaire would be useful.
5. It would be useful to have some reference to existing literature within the discussion section to highlight what this study adds to the existing knowledge base. Much of what the study found is further evidence of the known gap between research and policy, but it provides useful and specific evidence of how investment in research training can help to bridge this gap, and further ideas about how this can be improved.
6. The discussion section could also mention the methodological challenges of identifying the societal impact of research, and note the importance of addressing these challenges – as noted in the background section, there are very few studies that have sought to understand the impact of research capacity development on policy, but this is now widely understood to be important. Authors might want to see Bornmann’s recently published literature survey for a wider perspective on this: (Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 64(2):217–233, 2013)

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.