Reviewer's report

Title: A systematic review of barriers to data sharing in public health

Version: Date: 11 August 2014

Reviewer: Brian Lee

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Minor Essential Revisions:
1) The methods section includes a description of the method used to distill the initial, full set of barriers into the taxonomy of 20 barriers presented in the paper. Specifically "The initial list of barriers and categories was iteratively reviewed and refined by the expert group. The final taxonomy presented in this paper was jointly determined by the entire team of experts. For each barrier, available evidence was categorized as peer-reviewed or not and as empirically derived or not to assess variance in the type of evidence for different barriers." Would it be possible to describe: 1) the method used to iteratively review and refine? 2) the methods used by the full team of experts to end iterations and set the final taxonomy. The paper references this technique and the author contributions section describes some of the activity. But I believe the actual technique and filtering techniques will be useful to how the 20 final barrier categories was reached.

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:

The paper references numerous data systems of my employer, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; but I declare that I have no competing interests with this paper.