Reviewer's report

Title: Applying the balanced scorecard to local public health performance measurement: deliberations and decisions

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Reviewer: Colleen Frances F Coop

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'Applying the balanced scorecard to local public health performance measurement: deliberations and decisions'

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- Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

1. Overall for a reader interested in the applications of the Balanced Scorecard to the area of Public Health this is an interesting article. However all but the most informed readers (especially if one is an overseas researcher) will not be familiar with the rationale and evolution of the original four quadrants used by Kaplan and Norton (innovation and learning, customer satisfaction, internal processes and financial) into what is now in the “Balanced Scorecard for Public Health”.

It is strongly recommended that the background section include some detail on how the new four relate to, or translate from, the original, so that the integrity of the original is kept intact in both the readers’ minds and in the ensuing research and development that these researchers or others in the same field may undertake.

2. Overall whilst a succinct overview is provided of the development of indicators, the article would benefit (words and space permitting) from more detail on “what level of performance should be measured” and the sections on what type of indicators should populate the four quadrants. As the intent of the article is to progress the research community’s understanding of accountability and how to demonstrate it in various health scenarios, the article should perhaps include more discussion on the key indicators chosen, why and how it is expected they will be collected, validated and briefly the intervention logic behind their choice within the relevant quadrant.

- Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

3. Page 8 – line 2.”indicator” should read “indicators”.

4. Page 4 Kaplan and Norton – reference given is for 1996. This is the
publication date of the tool and the generally accepted reference? Rather than 1992 as in the text.

**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.