Reviewer's report

Title: The positive impact of a facilitated peer mentoring program on academic skills of women faculty

Version: 2 Date: 14 December 2011

Reviewer: Karen Leslie

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Methods/program description

There remain some inconsistencies in the description of the program and the processes involved in grouping the mentees. The methods section describes that participants were invited to participate in the project and asked to submit names of other faculty of similar academic rank with whom they wished to work. They then go on to say that: These faculty mentees were divided into 5 peer groups. Mentees who had signed up for the project were grouped by the organizers of the program to optimally match research and clinical interests based on their curriculum vitae and scholarly interests.

However in the discussion it is stated that: Our intent had been to require the peers to self-identify their collaborators, and identify groups by chosen interest. Groups were constructed to reflect shared values, interests, and skill sets to as great an extent as possible. This highly structured approach, which allowed peers to choose their peer mentoring groups but did not require them to find their own mentor may have accounted for the successful outcomes of this project.

Results:

While the outcomes of some of the participants are admirable, and clearly at least some of the participants found the group format and facilitator support very useful, it is still very difficult to understand whether the 9 publications were for 9 out of 17 participants, or whether some mentees were responsible for more than one of the publications (the qualitative data includes a quote that mentions ‘2 publications’)

I also feel that the lack of clarify about the range of sessions across the 5 groups is problematic. Of the 5 groups, were there one or two that met more consistently? Or out of each group were there a few mentees who consistently showed up for the group sessions? Despite this being identified as a limitation, not having any of this detail about the ‘dose’ of the intervention makes it difficulty to make a clear association between what it was about this program that allowed some of the participants to be successful.

Was there a trend towards those mentees who attended more consistently being
the ones with more productivity?

The qualitative comments are also presented in a way that makes it unclear about whether which groups the quotes came from, i.e. were there some groups in which mentees provided largely positive comments? Or were the positive and constructive comments from across all 5 groups?

**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'