Reviewer's report

Title: Conceptual and practical challenges for implementing the communities of practice model on a national scale: a Canadian cancer control initiative

Version: 1 Date: 13 July 2009

Reviewer: Charmaine McPherson

Reviewer's report:

1. Does the debate present a novel argument, or a novel insight into existing work?

Yes, the authors present timely and novel arguments on this issue. They build nicely on existing work. This is an important debate that should quickly reach a broader audience through publication.

2. Does the debate address an important problem of interest to a broad biomedical audience?

This issue should be of interest for a broad biomedical audience, although the authors do not necessarily position it as such. I have made a suggestion regarding broadening references to include more diverse applications, which should broaden the audience of interest.

3. Is the piece well argued and referenced?

Yes, the paper is well argued and referenced, with the noted exceptions regarding the introduction of network terminology without sufficient argumentation (see #4 that follows), and the need for more paper structure in terms of introductory section paragraphs throughout.

4. Has the author used logical arguments and sound reasoning?

a) Page 8, idea of community section, 1st sentence: introduce an argument regarding terminology that is not fully flushed out. Why does the term “network” not suggest strong ties of mutual engagement and accountability, etc.? Suggest adding a bit to this paragraph to strengthen your argument—it is left hanging here.

b) Page 10, para 2: introduce a coupling of CoP/Network…but how does this fit with the earlier arguments on page 8 that were unfinished?

c) Overall, mixing of theoretical language: “Wenger’s approach” “Wenger’s concept”; suggest reread entire paper and seek clarity around these issues vis-à-vis generally accepted social science terminology, given the connection to social science theory outlined in the paper.

5. Is the piece written well enough for publication? (nb. Since we do not charge
for access to published research, we cannot undertake the costs of editing poorly written manuscript. If you tell us that the writing is not acceptable for publication, we will ask the authors to find someone, or an editing service, to help them rewrite it. If you tell us that the manuscript is too poorly written for it to be peer reviewed, we will ask them to rewrite it now.)

This manuscript needs a thorough edit. I have offered many suggestions regarding the common errors that I see. It makes it difficult to read the paper when the flow is constantly interrupted by awkward sentence structure and such. However, I hope that I have provided sufficient detailed feedback so that the authors could quickly deal with these issues. The authors present a novel argument and critique of an important and timely theoretical issue and this should not be overshadowed by the required editing.

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Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Page 4, 2nd para: by now I have read several instances where the authors refer to Wenger’s work, where, in fact, it is Wenger and colleagues under reference [1]. Since attribution is a very serious issue, strongly suggest that authors review entire paper scanning for this error and make appropriate adjustments.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Page 3, first paragraph under CoP definition: usually do not refer to location of a passage (“above/below”); also redundant to refer to “the book” per se because it is already referenced under [1]—this can all be indicated in a cleaner sentence structure such as: “Wenger and colleagues’ communities of practice definition captures what they refer to as….”

2. Page 3, 2nd para under CoP definition: first sentence has text in quotation marks with no direct reference to source or page #, please reference correctly.

3. Within first two pages have frequently used parentheses within text to enclose additional material, which is distracting for the reader. Generally, use of parentheses should be limited to necessary issues only, such as introducing an abbreviation or setting off structurally independent elements (e.g., (see Figure 5)). Suggest the authors examine their sentences that contain unnecessary parentheses and restructure sentences to eliminate the parentheses.

4. Page 3, 2nd para after CoP definition: …They are also “passionate” about it…. Use of double quotation marks; does not fit with standard guidelines for use—not a verbatim passage, a title, or slang/coined term. The paper is littered with this inappropriate use of double marks, which is also distracting for the
reader--suggest examine use of double quotation marks throughout paper and adjust.

5. Page 4, 1st para, last sentence: awkward sentence structure; suggest reformat.

6. Page 4, 3rd para: variations in use of italics and double quotation marks for word emphasis with word community. The italics is correct and double quotation marks is incorrect (see #4 here as well). Distracts from flow and important content. Also, once introduce term once in italics, should cease using it for that term thereafter.

7. Page 4, para 4: tense when referring to sources; standard form is to use past tense..."Wenger and colleagues said that...."; review entire paper for this issue.

8. Page 4, para 4: overuse of dashes to indicate a sudden interruption in the continuity of the sentence. This overuse weakens the flow of the material. Suggest review entire paper and minimize use of dashes to most important material only.

9. Page 4, para 5: use of CoP abbreviation without properly introducing it using parentheses first (see #3 comment in this section).

10. Page 4, para 5, 1st sentence: rework sentence structure to eliminate “however” dangling at end.

11. Page 4, para 5, 2nd sentence: awkward structure—rework

12. Page 4, para 5, last sentence: awkward structure...."Throughout"...; also inappropriate use of double quotation mark around new terms introduced; italicize as noted in comment #6 here.

13. Page 4, para 5: introduces an overview of what the authors are going to be discussing herein. An introductory paragraph is missing from page 2 between the abstract and background sections. Adding an introductory paragraph there would inform the reader about the paper structure and how all sections are tied together. Suggest adding this on page 2 and adjusting para 5 on page 4 to fit this new format.

14. Page 5, para 2, 2nd sentence: check material in parentheses for guidelines—turn into another sentence—“here” is left hanging in sentence with punctuation error

15. Page 5, 2nd para, last sentence: use of author’s full name several times now in paper. Convention suggests that should avoid frequent use of this. In this instance, it breaks up a verbatim quotation, which disrupts the flow for the reader.

16. Page 5, 3rd para: No ned to cite full name of study because it is in the reference list. Also, it was the study authors who reported the results (not that “the study found that....”).
17. Page 6, para 2, 1st sentence: check sentence structure (eliminate use of dash) and final comment structure:.....in the hands of practitioners, not managers.....

18. Page 6, para 2, 2nd last sentence: do not start sentence with “And”

19. Page 6, para 1 under Limitations section: switch tense to past tense here...Critics have focused...; see comment # 7 here.

20. Page 6, para 1 under Limitations section, 3rd sentence: poor sentence structure; last sentence in paragraph also awkward in structure.

21. Page 7, para 1, last sentence: suggest not starting sentence with “But”

22. Page 6: strongly suggest that include an introductory paragraph outlining the subsections that will follow under the Limitations section. By page 7 it is reading as an unanticipated listing, esp when start with subsections under conceptual fuzziness.

23. Page 7, conceptual fuzziness section, 1st sentence: run-on sentence; break into 2 sentences

24. Page 7, conceptual fuzziness section, last sentence: these are not “definitions” rather they are aspects of the conceptual decription; also, end of sentence structure—lack of parallel construction... “of what communities of practice really are or what they can do.”

25. Page 7: again, introduce reader to the subsections that will follow under Conceptual Fuzziness at outset.

26. Page 8, para 1, last sentence: too long, break into smaller components. Also, check conventions on writing out digits for timeframes, i.e., 20th century

27. Page 8, para 2, last sentence is too long—break down.

28. Page 8, para 3, 2nd sentence: not parallel in constrction (before and after “or”)

29. Page 9, para 1, 2nd sentence: lack of parallelism; “Their members meet online and face-to-face, and they can number in the hundreds.”

30. Page 9, KT section start, 3rd sentence: lack of parallelism .... “enhancing collective knowhow to encompassing collective action.”

31. Page 9, KT section start, 4th sentence: run-on/too long sentence—separate out after Quebec.

32. Page 9, KT section start, 5th sentence: no need for quotation marks. “intensity...outcomes”

33. Page 9, KT section start, last sentence: word missing?... “interest in the processes of decision...”
34. page 9, last paragraph: need to properly reference CHAIN when introduce it in the first sentence (esp since there's the UK chain and the Canadian equivalent now).

35. Page 10, para1, 1st sentence: check sentence structure—run-on and not parallel

36. Page 10, para 1, last sentence: poorly structured sentence that distracts from the point the authors are trying to make.

37. Page 10, Next section (Canadian context), 1st sentence: addressing which questions? I assume the questions posed in previous section, but nee to further cue the reader—addressing the questions posed surrounding levels, etc etc

38. Page 10, para 2, 4th sentence: mixing tenses in same sentence…. “in the course of… it became apparent that… did not go very far…”

39. Page 10, para 3, 1st sentence: consider adding further more diverse examples beyond the cancer care domain—check many public health examples—since the statement is a broad one about Canadian health care in general.

40. Page 11, summary paragraph, 3rd sentence: use of “like” is colloquial

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.