Reviewer’s report

Title: The acceptability, feasibility and impact of a lay counsellor delivered Health Promoting Schools intervention in India: a mixed methods evaluation

Version: 1 Date: 9 January 2012

Reviewer: Freidoon A. Khavarpour

Reviewer’s report:

In general I think this is a good article and fit for publication. I have two major concerns as follows:

1. The authors have selected a qualitative method of study for this research project. However, it seems they are not convinced/comfortable with this method and see it as a "non-scientific" method of investigation. The statement such as "...this was not a controlled and statistically powered study with quantitative outcome measures, we cannot draw inferences about the effectiveness of the intervention in terms of its impact on students' knowledge or academic/health outcomes" [page 17, lines 8-10] shows such inadequacy and doubt on their selective research methodology. The next item below might be the reason for this discrepancy.

2. In the meantime, there is need for more evidence, such as statements made by the participants to support the proclamation made by authors that this study show the 'feasibility, acceptability and preliminary indication of impact of lay counsellors' on the outcomes. This is lacking and the reader has to rely on non evidence based statements made by the authors.

I also like to suggest a heading for the limitations of the study on page 17.

In the meantime:

When assessing the work, please consider the following points:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   The authors do not raise questions re the research conducted. It is a qualitative research methods and is more descriptive rather than responding to certain planned and conceived questions.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   It is a qualitative research study and is the only method of being used.

3. Are the data sound?
   The collected date is well presented. I was impressed by the outcome of data collection. Most of the collected data represented a 100% returned by the targets.
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   This is fine and well written and presented.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   This is adequately presented. I have some concern. Please see my letter.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   This is fine.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   Yes. There is one statement at the end of the article, referring to this issue.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   The abstract is adequately convened with the result/findings sufficiently discussed.

9. Is the writing acceptable?
   It is well written article with adequate references