Author’s response to reviews

Title: Networking between community health programs: effectiveness, barriers and enablers

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Dear Sir / Madam,

Thank you for reviewing the manuscript and for the helpful comments that have been provided by each of the reviewers. The reference from Dr George W. Pariyo shows that he clearly understands the merit of such an article, and having read some of his work I know that he is clearly very qualified to review and comment on a piece such as this which relates to the developing world and health networks. The other reviewer, Richard Alan Batley, provides helpful comments but a pub med search shows he is perhaps less experienced in the area that our work relates to. I think this may help to make sense of the discrepancy.

Again we reiterate that this work is perhaps not typical, but is equally very important as networks in Public Health have become central in allowing smaller organisations to function in an increasingly complicated health environment. It is extremely difficult for smaller health and development programs to exist in isolation from others. However, little is understood about networks in community health and what helps them form, sustain and grow. Given the ubiquity of networks in health we need to better understand how to facilitate them and maximise their input.

The following provides a point by point response to the reviewers’ comments:

1) Copy-editing
I have now had the article copy-edited by an experienced copy-editor to improve the style of written English.

2) Title page
We have included a title page, and as requested it provides the title of the article, lists the full names, institutional addresses and email addresses for all authors and indicates the corresponding author.

3) Competing interests
We have included a 'Competing interests' section that demonstrates that we have no competing interests, either financial or non financial.
4) Authors' contributions
We have included an ‘Authors’ contributions’ section before the Acknowledgements and Reference list.

5) Acknowledgements section
We have added an ‘Acknowledgements’ section where I have listed all contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship.

In response to the reviewers’ comments, the following changes have been made:
6) I have added profiles and numbers of persons who participated in the FGDs to the ‘Methods’ section.
7) I have changed 35 abbreviations from FDG to Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as suggested.
8) I have added profiles and numbers of persons who participated in the FGDs to the ‘Methods’ section.
9) I have provided some more clarity on how the FGD participants from each organisation were selected and on the homogeneity of the FGD participants.
10) As suggested, the title has been adjusted to make it clear that this was a case study.
11) I have engaged a copy editor in order to ensure that the writing is acceptable, and typos, inappropriate phrases and spelling mistakes were corrected. Numerous corrections have been made by the copy editor but the content has not been changed.
12) Figure 1 has been changed to table 1.

We think that these findings are important to assist other health NGOs explore how to maximise their performance through networks and collaboration.

Yours sincerely,

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