Reviewer’s report

Title: Infrastructural requirements for implementation of safety policies: an actor network theory analysis

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Reviewer: Dale Hanson

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Review

Infrastructure requirements for implementation of safety policies: an actor network theory analysis.

Toomas Timpka, Celia Nordqvist & Kent Lindqvist.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper & congratulations to the authors on an interesting study identifying an important strategic barrier to effective safety promotion at a community level. I believe the article should be accepted with some minor discretionary modifications.

My reading this manuscript does not suggest that any significant duplication or plagiarism has occurred.

The authors highlight the discordance between formal expert driven hierarchical vertical “top down” systems of organization and informal horizontal “bottom up” systems of organization. Despite a rhetoric that collaborative action is desirable, the way national government agents and tertiary research agents are organised and funded impose significant barriers to collaborative action at a local level. While it popular to talk about “top down” / “bottom up” projects there is poor appreciation that there are fundamental tension in how these two types of networks are structured and organised.

The authors do not mention the important point that there is a fundamental imbalance in power between community and the various levels of government. I think this would be an important issue for the authors to consider including in their discussion. Reference: Public Health: Power, Empowerment and Professional Practice, Glenn Laverack, 2005, Palgrave Macmillan.

A key observation from Hanson’s social network analysis of Mackay Whitsunday Safe Community, (Hanson, DW, Doctoral dissertation 2007, Chapter ten Measuring the Sustainability of Mackay Whitsunday Safe Communities Using Social Network Analysis, http://eprints.jcu.edu.au/1751/) is that resources (and infrastructure) are essentially controlled by external government agents. This is of course how government bodies maintain control over the social agenda. Therefore, an important strategic skill of community leaders representing Safe Communities is their ability to personally connect with government bodies and
navigate the tension between the two different paradigms of social organization (informal community networks and formal hierarchical systems).

In response to your specific assessment criteria:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Yes, but the academic language was sometimes a barrier to clear communication. I think the manuscript would be helped by stating the central thesis more clearly. I understood this thesis to say, that the “silo” structure of government organization and assignment of resources was a barrier to collaborative action at a community level.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? Yes

3. Are the data sound? Yes

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Yes

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? The authors do not address this in the manuscript.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? At one level yes, it describes what the article was about and the research paradigm used, but doesn’t point to the key observation of the study, the discordance between top down and bottom up systems of action.

9. Is the writing acceptable? As noted above, at times I think the academic style gets in the way of clear communication. I had to concentrate hard to understand what the authors were getting at. While academic precision is of course necessary I think the article would be helped by articulating their essential point more simply and plainly.

I trust this review is contractive and helpful.

**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