Reviewer’s report

Title: Overcoming language barriers in community-based research with refugee and migrant populations: options for using bilingual workers

Version: 1 Date: 21 January 2014

Reviewer: Allison Squires

Reviewer’s report:

Recommendation: Major Revision

Overall, this is a well written manuscript that describes an important methodological issue many researchers face when working with populations that do not speak the native language of the country. While the manuscript does provide great detail about the pros and cons of each type of interpreter used in this study based on the authors experiences, it does not adequately incorporate the literature on the subject. There is a decade worth of publications by M. Twinn, B. Temple, Temple & Young, A. Squires, and many, many others that the authors should have read and cited. They should also have made arguments that supported why their choices were better than what is recommended in multiple other studies and publications centered on cross-cultural research.

In addition, the article is really more about implementation science and the implementation challenges that go along with working with interpreters in research. As written, the authors do not link their choices to an improved intervention or sufficiently convince me that their choices made any difference in the results. It really comes across as what was most convenient for the researchers and NOT what would produce the most methodologically sound results. In fact, the use of so many different types of interpreters in one study suggests poor planning on the part of the researchers and threatens the reliability and validity of the results.

If the authors were to make their literature review reflect the extent of the evidence on this topic and frame this paper more as a methods paper that focuses on the pros and cons of each type of interpreter used and implementation lessons learned.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.