Reviewer's report

Title: Voices from the frontline: Supervising infant feeding community peer counsellors in South Africa, a qualitative study

Version: 1 Date: 28 May 2009

Reviewer: Peter Winch

Reviewer's report:

Reviewer's report: The is an acceptable manuscript, but some revisions are necessary.

1. The word "management" appears so frequently that it detracts from the paper. For example on page 24 "These interviews have shown that the task of supervision is facilitated by good management. This kind of management relies on good senior management in combination with the individual's capacity for self management and their sense of self efficacy. Supervisors need to feel structurally supported by senior management." Aside from the stylistic problem, the term is very general, so in some cases it is unclear what specific phenomenon is being referred to. "Emotional management" is an example where an alternative term might be more informative such as emotional support.

2. Cell phones are seen by some as a panacea for weak referral and supervision systems. This article suggests that there are important limitations to the supervision that can be provided by telephone e.g. "Telephone call support it's not effective at all for myself because the peer supporter only tells you what she thinks you need to know but you haven't seen what she did and that's the difference." This point might be stressed, by presenting more data related to this point, mentioning it in the abstract, and/or discussing it more in the discussion section.

3. At several times the authors cite a large number of sources at once, sometimes more than 10. I don't find that very informative, particularly when some of the sources are lengthy reports. I would prefer to have the authors cite fewer sources, and be more specific about what section or finding in the report they are referring to.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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