Reviewer's report

Title: Networking among young global health researchers through a North-South intensive training approach: a mixed methods case study

Version: 1  Date: 1 October 2013

Reviewer: Kalpana Nair

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
The authors cite research objectives but have not actually listed research questions. The research objectives of understanding the role of networking at various stages of the Summer Institute and mechanisms for network development are not necessarily new, however the results could be of use to those forming or evaluating their own networks.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
The use of a mixed methods approach is appropriate, however description of the type of mixed methods approach should be described (i.e. sequential, concurrent, exploratory, explanatory, etc.). Some consideration of the integration of both sources of data should also be included. As well, the title uses the language of “case study” and this does not reflect the methods used in the paper.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
The data collection processes are sound and well controlled. There was concerted effort made to get a range of participants.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
The data are reported in an expected format for both qualitative and quantitative data.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
It would be recommended that the process model that was developed be included in the results section as this really was a product of the research. The authors have positioned many of their results within the broader literature, however, the discussion is lacking a thorough exploration of what their findings mean for global health networks. The discussion felt generic and not really rooted within global networks. As well, the ‘so what’ of this research was not particularly evident, nor were the main messages of this work. The presentation of some ‘implications for practice’ would be helpful.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
The inclusion of the words “North-South” in the title does not reflect the language used in the paper; use of the word Summer Institute would be more accurate.

7. Is the writing acceptable?
The writing is clear and acceptable. There were minor typos, but overall, there was good attention to the clarity of writing.

- Essential Revisions

1. The title should reflect the actual methods used.
2. In the Networks and Networking section, paragraph 4, the use of questions seems awkward…it is not certain whether this was the presentation of research questions. If so, a more purposeful presentation of results related to this as well as literature to substantiate the results in the discussion would be helpful.
3. The type of mixed methods study should be described.
4. Integration of the 2 types of data needs to be discussed and presented.
5. Table 2 is difficult to understand
6. In the discussion, discuss implications of the results – what is the ‘so what’ from this study

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.