Reviewer's report

**Title:** Challenges of Establishing a Community Advisory Board (CAB) in a Low-Income, Low-Resource Setting: Experiences from Bagamoyo, Tanzania.

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 10 March 2009

**Reviewer number:** 2

**Reviewer's report:**

1. **Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?**

   The question posed by the investigators is an important one – how to establish and sustain a community advisory board in a rural African setting. The goals of the paper are clearly defined – to describe the process and lessons learned.

2. **Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?**

   The paper is descriptive and is not based on methods such as key informant interviews, focus groups or other qualitative data gathering techniques. A more systematic approach to assessing lessons learned would have strengthened the paper. However, this format seems appropriate for a commentary paper.

3. **Are the data sound and well controlled?**

   Again, the paper is a description of the process of forming and sustaining a community consultation. The paper is not based on systematic data collection. Nonetheless, the paper serves a valuable function in describing the barriers to developing a functional CAB and successful efforts to overcome these barriers. These kinds of rich descriptions are useful to other research groups who are faced with similar challenges.

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

   As a lessons learned paper, the reporting is clear and consistent with the questions posed. Some observations, such as the CAB operating “smoothly” could benefit from more detail. The process of “election” could also be described in more detail to assist others who may wish to use this model.

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

   The discussion is thoughtful and the observations on the challenges of monetary expectations are quite helpful. It would have been helpful to know a bit more about the training; e.g. were standard materials used from other studies or research networks or were they developed by the research team? The section on the role of the CAB is also thoughtful. Again, a bit more detail on the community
consultation function, which inevitably involved discussions of fairness and assessments of what is acceptable in communities, and how this differs from Institutional Review Board considerations would have helped the discussion.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes

**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.