Reviewer's report

Title: Public Health: Disparities between policy, practice and research

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Reviewer: Erica Di Ruggiero

Reviewer's report:

The authors offer an analysis of the disconnect between research, policy and practice in public health. The following comments are offered to help strengthen the arguments and analysis put forward.

1. The authors need to make the argument upfront regarding why an analysis of the differences between research, policy and practice domains in public health matters.

Is it because there is a sense that these collaborations across these domains will help create more effective opportunities to jointly wrestle with complex public health problems? While the reasons may be self-evident, some reflection on the potential benefits and therefore why this analysis matters would strengthen the manuscript.

Second, how will this contribute to our knowledge base? (there are some references to the knowledge exchange literature but these could be more explicit). Third, the discussion about evidence comes quite late in the manuscript and isn’t really foreshadowed upfront to set the stage for the reader.

2. The limitations of methods chosen should be briefly described. In addition, while there is mention that the workcycle models presented don’t adequately reflect the realities of policy making cycle (for example), why is it a useful and practical framework through which to conduct this analysis? A brief addition following “The work cycle model helped us to structure and interpret the literature” would help.

3. At times, it is unclear whether the authors are generalizing from the literature and/or their experience derived from their country context. Some clarification of such references is needed. Further, some more nuanced discussion of how some of the domains are categorically labelled as more concrete (in the case of practitioners), how evaluation is only a theoretical exercise, that theory is irrelevant to practice or that ’a small ruling elite’ are the primary agenda setters is needed.

4. The definitions for some terms (e.g. policy, research) are limited (most likely by the literature that was reviewed). While these domains are very broad and their scope could not be adequately addressed in any one article, some mention of the disciplinary perspective authors are bringing would be useful. For example, the authors could further acknowledge their epistemological perspective, which has
influenced which questions they are asking in the first place.

5. Some of the terminology used may need to be reconsidered. For example, 'disparities' between research, policy and practice does not reflect the more common usage of this term. Suggest that the authors consider disconnect or differences (as the title of Table I suggests). Additionally, it is not the social status of practitioners that is relevant to mention but perhaps not valuing research (see p. 14). On page 14, suggest 'accessible', which is broader than readable.

6. The section on evidence - while the individualized focus on risk factors, etc. in public health dominates decision-making, the same could be said about all three domains (research and practice). This points to more systemic influences on knowledge production and its use, what is valued as evidence, etc. Some acknowledgement of the latter would be useful.

7. The conclusion could be strengthened by re-stating some of the different incentive structures, language and timelines between these domains and what could be improved could help strengthen the potential for collaboration across these domains. The reference to the centres comes a bit out of the blue. Perhaps a transition sentence about why this example is worth mentioning. Is it because your findings suggest the need for novel structures that bridge research, policy and practice and that one such example with this mandate are the ones you mention?

**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