Reviewer's report

**Title:** Evidence-based practice implementation: The impact of public vs. private sector organization type on organizational support, provider attitudes, and adoption of evidence-based practice

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 30 September 2008

**Reviewer:** Marko Elovainio

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REVIEWER’S COMMENTS TO AUTHOR(S):

The authors investigate the cross-sectional associations between organizational type (public vs. private), organizational support for EBP, provider attitudes toward EBP and subsequent EBP use. The authors hypothesized that private sector organizations would provide greater levels of organizational support for EBPs leading to more positive provider attitudes towards EBPs and more frequent EBP use. According to the results of multilevel path analysis, private agencies provided greater support for EBP implementation and staff working for private agencies reported more positive attitudes toward adopting EBPs. Organizational support for EBP partially mediated the association of organization type and provider attitudes toward EBP, which was related to EBP use.

This is a potentially interesting small scale study, but I have some concerns that may question the merit of the study in its current form. The biggest problems are study design, residual confounding, testing procedure and a bit strong conclusions. Something needs to be done with analyzing procedure and reporting of the results.

My suggestions how to improve the study are listed here:

Major compulsory revision:

1. The introduction is basically clearly written and easy to follow. However, it is lengthy and could be reduced about to half of its current length. Especially the hypothesis about the differences between private and public sector organizations could be tuned down and some of could be transferred to discussion.

2. I am not familiar with the ways mental health services are organized in US, and thus more information, however, is needed on this. At least Europe there are some fundamental differences in case mix, resources and organizational size between private and public organizations that may affect the possibilities in adopting new practices.
3. In this study, organizational type is basically a black box (not much to about the characteristics the make private and public different). Because of the importance of the factors behind the differences between the different types of organizations, I recommend that the authors present (in table 1) all the variables (frequencies or means and p-values for difference) in groups working in public and private organizations.

4. Instead (or in addition to) of path analyses, I'd like to see analyses of variance (or multilevel regression) using EBP attitudes and EBP use as dependent variables and organization type as independent variables. Then the role possible confounders or mediators could be tested by hierarchically adding other variables in the models.

5. All of the associations that are not statistically significant in correlations become significant in path models. Possible reasons for this could be discussed more (if path analysis is used).

6. Again evident sources of residual confounding (case mix, resources, workload etc) that should be discussed and some of the conclusions may be tuned down. This is a small scale study, with self-reported measures and limited number of explanatory variables

Minor essential revisions:

7. There is some inconsistency in references in text.

**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