Reviewer's report

Title: Drawbacks and benefits associated with inter-organizational collaboration along the discovery-development-delivery continuum: A cancer research network case study

Version: 2 Date: 30 April 2012

Reviewer: kara Hall

Reviewer's report:

Overall: As previously indicated, this manuscript is certain to make a meaningful contribution to implementation science (as well as across the research continuum) as well as to the Science of Team Science. The findings support some likely anticipated relationships across the research continuum (e.g., positive association between knowledge sharing and collaboration) and highlight important new relationships, which can serve as the basis for future investigations and indicate potential leverage points for future policies and interventions to enhance scientific collaborations (and thereby leading to more efficient and effective investments and advancements in science).

The authors have been extremely responsive to the reviews.

The most significant concern for the manuscript at this point is the discrepancy between the results and discussion section (and lack of interpretation in the abstract) related to the finding, “The only consistent association across all three was with the drawback of difficulty due to geographical differences, which was negatively associated with collaboration”. In the results section the finding is interpreted as: “only the drawback of geographical distance was significantly associated (b=-4.63; se=1.20) ... The negative association between collaboration and distance indicates that organizations collaborating in this network were less likely to see geographical distances as a barrier” (p12 and again on 13). Yet the discussion section reads as follows: “the drawback to collaboration, difficulty due to geographical distances, was negative and significant across all three networks indicating that geography may be a major and consistent barrier to research collaboration, regardless of stage of research. These interpretations seem to be contradictory. Please clarify this and amend the text throughout (abstract, three
subsections of the results and discussion).

Abstract:
- Major Compulsory Revisions
  • Clarification of findings related to difficulty due to geographical distances
  • The phrase”…to people with cancer in need” is unclear
- Minor Essential Revisions

Background:
No further comments or concerns

Methods:
No further comments or concerns

Results:
- Major Compulsory Revisions
  • Clarification of findings related to difficulty due to geographical distances for
discovery, development, and delivery
- Minor Essential Revisions
  • Results (on page 12) include report statistical information (e.g., b=-4.63;
  se=1.20), but other sections do not. A consistent approach should be used for
  reporting such details (or not reporting such details) in the text.
- Discretionary Revisions

Discussion and Conclusion:
- Major Compulsory Revisions
  • Clarification of findings related to difficulty due to geographical distances

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests