Reviewer's report

Title: Influence network linkages across treatment conditions in randomized controlled trials

Version: 1 Date: 19 June 2013

Reviewer: Geoffrey Curran

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Influence network linkages across treatment conditions in randomized controlled trials
Palinkas et al.

This well-written paper describes a social network analysis of an ambitious county-level implementation trial in California. The aim of the overall study is to test the effectiveness of a peer-to-peer interactive approach to training and implementing a complex EBP in public youth systems. The intervention counties got the peer-to-peer interactive intervention, while the comparison counties received "solo" assistance with training and uptake. The goal of this paper was to determine if social influence networks "cut across" treatment conditions, thereby threatening internal validity. While I understand the goals of the current paper, my lack of knowledge with social network analysis limits my ability to provide expert critique of the methods and limits the scope of my review. The paper needs a review by social network analysis expert. This being said, I found the discussion to be appropriately measured in discussed the findings, and it seemed to me that the conclusions were well balanced and supported by the data. The introduction, research questions, and description of the study were all well defined. I had some relatively minor questions concerning the interviews as noted below.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Could the authors discuss whether the 60/40 split among the administrator sample across intervention and comparison counties is a problem or not and why?

2. It appears that the number of interviews obtained by country ranged from 2 to 6. Are there any potentially problematic implications with the range of responses?

3. A third of the interviews were completed by phone, and two-thirds face-to-face. Was this by design? Could the authors explain this difference?

Minor Essential Revisions

None

Discretionary Revisions
4. I am wondering if it would be possible for the authors to include the interview guide they used for the interviews as a supplemental file? It would be helpful to see the probes used and get a fuller sense of the interaction.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

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