Reviewer's report

Title: Realities of Replication: Implementation of Evidence-Based Interventions for HIV Prevention in Real-World Settings

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Reviewer: Joseph A Durlak

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Review of Cunningham et al.

In general, I felt this manuscript was very well written and easy to follow. My main concerns involves what exactly does this investigation contribute to the literature and the limitations in its design and data collection.

1. A response rate of 66% is good for a survey but does not overcome the possible selectivity involved among the respondents. Perhaps only the more successful were respondents.

2. It is not clear how many of the survey items were presented (likert, yes/ no responses) and what it took for some items to be scored. For example, how exactly were likert items collapsed into simple agree/disagree categories? How were the following assessed and scored: “Participants representing organizations that had implemented or were currently implementing the program were additionally asked questions regarding the target population reached, type of and reasons for program adaptations made, evaluation activities conducted, and training and technical assistance received. “

3. There seems to be a problem when the authors selected only one program from organizations that had solicited more than one. Shouldn’t the focus been on the one that was implemented? It is likely and a good strategy for organizations to consider multiple options and choose the one that is more likely to fit the setting and goal. If I understand the method correctly, the authors missed an opportunity to study organizations that implemented programs.

4. The term, “stage” of implementation, is unfortunate. The authors appear to use: not implemented, implemented once or in the process, or preparing for implementation.

I would recommend terminology other than “stages” because this term has come to mean very different things in implementation science, and not the simple division suggested here.

5. It is hard to interpret any of the data on “program reach” without knowing the intended sample. Reach is an important consideration for effective implementation. Perhaps the 11,000 participants was only a small fraction of the target group and most of the programs were poorly implemented.

6. There is only very general information presented on training and further
assistance so I do not think the authors’ general conclusions on these matters are warranted. We do not know what type and for how long this training/assistance was offered.

7. “Availability of funding, staff, and other resources” was a single item but it seems to measure three different things, so which of these is important?

8. The Discussion does not acknowledge all the major limitations of this study. Given the many issues with this study, I do not think the following conclusion is warranted:

9. In the concluding comments, the authors overstate their findings … “this study demonstrates the success of Sociometrics’ program archives to promote the adoption, implementation, and evaluation of a wide variety of evidence-based HIV prevention programs among a diverse pool of practitioners nationwide.”

According to the current study, Socimetrics’ products have been adopted, but we hardly know about the quality of implementation and evaluation, and thus the success of any of these ventures.

My points numbered 2, 3, 5, 6 and 8 are compulsory; the others are minor.

**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.