Reviewer's report

Title: The Role of Interpersonal Communication in the Process of Knowledge Mobilization within a Community-Based Organization: A Network Analysis

Version: 1 Date: 22 August 2013

Reviewer: Thomas Valente

Reviewer's report:

This MS reports on a network analysis of a CBO designed to determine if interpersonal communication is associated with knowledge and behavior of spinal cord injury (SCI) physical activity guidelines. Results show that in-degree centrality was associated with being aware of the guidelines and PA actions. Implications for understanding knowledge utilization and transfer are presented.

Overall this is a good, if somewhat limited study. The results are interesting and study implementation sound. Some suggestions to improve the MS.

Major compulsory revisions

First, the authors might consider combining the three behavioral items into a scale. This could be done using factor analysis and this would perhaps gain more power in the analysis.

Second, authors should consider restricting the study only to staff members. Since volunteers were much less likely to complete the survey it might make sense to simply omit them and note this in a footnote. Indeed, given the low response rate of volunteers, there is likely bias in their reports anyway. Restricting the study to staff would then also allow the researchers more confidence in their findings. As it is, one worries that the effects documented in the analysis are a function of staff versus volunteer contrasts rather than core-periphery ones.

Third, I am surprised the authors did not conduct a multivariate analysis. The data certainly seem to suggest that staff and volunteers are different and one could regress the outcomes on the independent variables.

Finally, the authors need to justify why they don’t fit an exponential random graph model to the data.

Minor essential revisions:

Abstract: “SCI” is introduced before we know what it is.

Page 3: “there is inadequate understanding of the how communication networks (e.g., who is in contact with whom) account for the success or failure of knowledge mobilization efforts [7].”
Drop “the”

Questionnaire: The authors state that respondents wrote the names of those they communicated with. Can authors clarify if they wrote the names, thus requiring some name-text matching, or were they able to select them from a menu or drop-down list?

Page 9: To account for network size, normalized scores of in- and out-degree centrality measures were used.
You don’t need to do this because you have only one network.

Author’s contributions: “SP provided input regarding the design; network and statistical analysis; interpretation of results; and editorial feedback”
SP is not an author, perhaps this should be SM?

Page 13: “As such, CBOs aiming to mobilize knowledge within the organizations should not only assume that all communication efforts are equal.”
Drop “only”

Page 14: “The network analysis approach used in the present study is both unique and valuable.”
The approach is not unique, valuable yes, but not unique.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests: No competing interests