Author's response to reviews

Title: The effectiveness of community engagement in public health interventions for disadvantaged groups: A meta-analysis

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Author's response to reviews: see over
We would like to thank the reviewers and editors for reviewing our responses to their initial feedback. We note from the editors that two items remain outstanding for our attention.

A sentence or two in the discussion drawing attention to the date of the searches with consideration of the extent to which new evidence is likely to have emerged since 2011 and the extent to which the inclusion of these new studies would change the findings and the validity of this review.

We have added the following text to the discussion:

“Such broad reviews take considerable time and resource, and while there is an inevitable delay between when the searches were carried out (2011) and eventual publication, we do not think this necessarily undermines the currency of the findings presented. The theories of change around which our analyses are structured are based on enduring concepts around community engagement, some of which date from half a century and more ago. We have no reason to believe that community engagement as a theory and as a practice has undergone a fundamental shift since these theories were developed. Moreover, even if a radically new approach has been tested in a small number of studies, any effects would need to be implausibly large – as would the studies themselves – to be able to change the results of our meta-analysis (given that it is based on more than 100 studies). We are therefore confident that the results of this analysis will remain valid for many years to come.”

An appendix with the risk of bias assessment tool, (the tool itself not the results) detailed, including how the overall assessment was made should be added.

We have now added an ‘Appendix C’ which details our data extraction and risk of bias tool. We have also added a reference to this appendix in the methods section of the paper.