Reviewer’s report

Title: Needs Assessment of School and Community Physical Activity Opportunities in Rural West Virginia: The McDowell CHOICES planning effort

Version: 2 Date: 12 January 2015

Reviewer: Daniel Bornstein

Reviewer’s report:

General statement: The authors are to be commended for having completed a highly thorough needs assessment of a rural West Virginia county. Aside from one issue related to the physical activity survey that was administered, the methods appear to be quite sound. The greatest challenge to publication of this article however is its lack of generalizability, as discussed in the major compulsory revisions section below.

Major Compulsory Revisions:
1. I am concerned about the lack of generalizability of the current study. As currently written, the discussion section is limited solely to McDowell county. In order to appeal to a broader spectrum of readers, I feel it will be important to make inferences from the current study to other rural counties/regions of the U.S.

2. As it’s currently written, the Discussion section has virtually no connection to the current literature. I’m not sure there was a single citation in the entire section. By linking the statements made, particularly in the “empowerment” section, with existing literature will serve two purposes. First, it will help strengthen the statements being made. Second, it will help make the section more generalizable.

Minor Essential Revisions:
1. Methods section (lines 153-156): Some more details about the survey may be necessary. For example, by whom was the survey developed? If previously tested for validity and reliability, please state that. If not, please identify as a weakness in the Discussion.

2. Results section (lines 277-278): Is there a relationship between disrupted families and PA? If so, please use citations to support this statement.

3. Discussion section (lines 314-317): Was this meeting part of this study? I don’t recall seeing this in the methods/results. Please clarify. If not part of this study, please state that explicitly.

4. Given the prominence of the WV State Physical Activity Plan, and the National Physical Activity Plan, efforts should be made to tie in the findings/recommendations from the current study to those in either or both of these PA plans. Doing so may not only help provide residents of McDowell County with concrete action steps, but may also help improve the generalizability.
of the current study to other rural communities in WV and/or the U.S.

Discretionary Revisions:
1. Lines 107-136: Maintain past-tense throughout this section
2. Please see attached document for additional minor edits/comments.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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