Reviewer's report

Title: Building school-based cardiovascular health promotion capacity in youth: a mixed methods study

Version: 2 Date: 13 October 2014

Reviewer: David Dzewaltowski

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Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The authors address the important topic of youth led health promotion. It appears that the objective of the intervention is to build youth assets through implementing health promotion efforts at school and home. However, the objective of the effort is not well defined. Please specifically define several aims/hypotheses in the background section and carry these through to the discussion.

2. The manuscript needed greater detail on the theoretical rationale, background literature, and intervention delivered. Please delete general health promotion information and write in a more succinct manner.

3. The intervention appears to be limited in scope and not very engaging such that rather than reaching a whole school it is limited to one classroom and that classroom lacked engagement in the second year. This could be due to a lack of communicating the story. Provide more detail on training, activities done with youth, and their challenges.

4. Qualitative research has the potential to provide a wealth of information but the findings are rather limited. In the space gained by deleting unnecessary content, provide more qualitative results regarding what happened over the two years.

Minor essential revisions

5. Line 23 - Define the 5 C model.

6. Line 24 - The model focuses on building personal and social developmental assets. These are mediators of health behavior. Education, empowerment and supports are methods to do this. Please define the causal links leading to health behavior according to the 5 C model.

7. Line 38 - ...PYD measure...

8. Line 77 - The literature on coordinated approaches to school health is not current and not comprehensive. Please review contemporary papers.

9. Line 107 - There is a large literature on using positive youth development to promote health behaviors that is not addressed. Please address this literature in
the into and discussion.


10. Line 144 - There is not enough detail on the intervention to evaluate the study. Provide detail on the theoretical rationale, evidence-based practices designed to target, and training protocol. Was the target individual, home and/or school health promotion?

11. Line 145 - There appears to be two behavioral targets (smoking, physical activity) and one outcome target (obesity). Why wasn't nutrition addressed?

12. Line 246 - The results do not provide much qualitative information on the intervention effectiveness. What did the youth identify, initiate, lead and monitor? What changed at the school and home? What were the barriers to implementing change?

13. Line 386 - Do classes stay together over two years. Were the students the same?

14. Line 414 - This is not a novel intervention. The authors do not address key literature regarding youth led efforts in smoking, physical activity and nutrition in the discussion.


15. Reduce the number of supplemental tables and integrate information in text.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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’ below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.