Reviewer’s report

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

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Reviewer: Laura Hayman

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Building School-Based Cardiovascular Health Promotion Capacity in Youth: A Mixed Methods Study

The stated purpose of this mixed methods case study, a two-year school-based feasibility study, was to determine if providing a research intervention in the form of education, empowerment and support, build youth’s capacity for cardiovascular health promotion (page 2). This two-year mixed methods case study was designed to evaluate the process and outcomes of a youth led cardiovascular health promotion program (page 2, line 30). Conducted in Canada, the study included N=26 youth (aged 12-13 years) who were drawn from a middle school.

As the authors indicate in the introduction and review of literature, the significance/importance of cardiovascular health promotion efforts focused on children and youth has been well-documented and justified. School-based programs have the potential to reach a vast majority of youth since ~ 95% attend school (including preschool). This case study is well-written with sufficient detail on the source of participants and the sample as well as methods of assessment (pre and post intervention) and process and outcome evaluation. The conceptual model (the Five C’s model of PVD) is also viewed as a strength of this study with concepts that were operationalized in the education intervention and (developmentally) appropriate for the target population. Approaches to qualitative and quantitative data analyses are appropriate to the aims of the study and clearly presented in text and tables in the manuscript. Limitations of the study including the small, one site convenience sample and the lack of a “true” experimental design are clearly identified and acknowledged (page 22). In addition, the authors acknowledge that this homogeneous sample was not at high risk- (partially explaining the lack of post-intervention between group differences). The authors should identify future directions for research in this important area of inquiry.

Level of interest: An article of importance 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:

'I declare that I have no competing interests.