Reviewer's report

**Title:** A stitch in time saves nine? A repeated cross-sectional case study on the implementation of the intersectoral community approach Youth At a Healthy Weight

**Version:** 2  
**Date:** 31 July 2015

**Reviewer:** Sara Folta

**Reviewer's report:**

- Major Compulsory Revisions

This study describes an innovative approach to addressing the issue of program implementation that is longitudinal and systematic. A major strength is the rigor in collecting these data. The paper would be improved by exploring the implications of the findings and the limitations in more depth.

A major concern is a general lack of campaign self-reflection related to these finding in the Discussion. Instead there is emphasis on corroboration of results with previous IACOs, which, while somewhat useful, is essentially an apples-to-oranges comparison. There is secondarily emphasis on the usefulness of the methodology (Fleurin framework, use of QCA), which is also important but ultimately missing the point of what the results are suggesting regarding this campaign and its implementation; and how this approach more generally was useful (or not) in reaching those conclusions. As the authors note, the specific findings from this study are unlikely to be perfectly generalizable; however a more nuanced discussion of how this analysis informed campaign adjustments and provided lessons learned for future iterations of the campaign would be very useful to other researchers.

More specifically, a benefit of doing this type of longitudinal analysis is the ability to adapt and improve the campaign materials to achieve a better fit with the implementing organizations. However there is no discussion about whether and how this occurred; apparently there was no attempt at using the data for iteration of the campaign. Figure 1 is somewhat confusing in this regard. The research instruments were reviewed and adapted, but what about campaign materials? It seems that the professionals requested adaptations (“...need expressed by professionals from four out of five sectors to adjust the campaign and its strategies to local needs”) but the campaign went forth collecting data related to implementation, carefully reviewing and revising these research instruments in an iterative process, without any attempt to use this information to refine the campaign itself. At a minimum, the Discussion should include more of this self-reflection and how this type of analysis might be used to adjust and adapt to better serve the needs of the organizations.

There should be more explanation about the t3 sustainability piece. While the
campaign manager was temporarily incapacitated, if this is truly a sustainability phase then this should have less of an effect – organizations should be more independent of the campaign manager at this stage. Also, why were plans not in place on the campaign side to address this type of issue?

- Minor Essential Revisions

Well generally well-written with a good logical flow, there are a number of typos, minor grammatical errors, and misspellings throughout the paper. For example, in the first paragraph of the Background: “are attributed to four centRAL pillars…”; Youth at a HealthY Weight”; second paragraph, “to develop innovatIVE strategies…”

Also in the second paragraph, the second sentence would be easier to read if changed to “…since program completion, dose or reach are infrequently reported…”

In the Results, it would be helpful to have more detail regarding priority organizations (those “… considered as the most important implementers by campaign management”, research phase A, final paragraph). What was the basis – potential number of children reached, for example?

In the Results section, regarding the sports sector, it is not clear how there was very low adherence overall (0-33%) with cessation of campaign activities after the initial phase; but follow-up with medium to high adherers is reported. Was the definition of adherence altered for this group?

In the Discussion, second paragraph: “Fleuren et al. proved INadequate…”

- Discretionary Revisions

In the first paragraph of Methods, move the reference to Figure 1 up to the third sentence, “…we first performed an inventory of the campaign’s setup (t0, research phase A) (Figure 1)”.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.