Author’s response to reviews

Title: Systematic appraisal of integrated community-based approaches to prevent childhood obesity. Do we have the tools?

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

On behalf of my co-authors I re-submit with revisions our article entitled “Systematic appraisal of integrated community-based approaches to prevent childhood obesity. Do we have the tools?” to your journal Biomedical Central Public Health.

Please find below our reply under the reviewer’s comment.

My original comment 7 was:

To enable a judgement about the quality (or not) of a program requires comparison with an 'ideal' or benchmark, e.g. an effective program. This seems to be implicit in the process evaluation but is never made explicit to the reader. Alternatively, to investigate what components might be working or not, requires knowledge of the outcome/impact of the program - but this is also not addressed in the paper.
And the authors' response was:

-We thank the reviewer for this comment and we regret to. The implicit benchmarks of the evaluation of the components of the CBA's were the pillars of EPODE with addition of more detailed questions formulated by the evaluators. We performed a process evaluation of the use of these pillars, not their effectiveness which would require a completely different study design.

Given that the first sentence of the authors' response is incomplete I'm not sure what the authors intended to say. However, I couldn't find any change to the paper. I think it will be very helpful to the reader to include a statement in the paper along the lines of the authors statement to me: "The implicit benchmarks of the evaluation of the components of the CBA's were the pillars of EPODE. We performed a process evaluation of the use of these pillars." It is not necessary for the authors to provide justification for why an evaluation of effectiveness was not done.

- We thank the reviewer for the valuable comment and we regret to have left our response incomplete. We have taken into account the suggestion mentioned and made the following revision:

“In order to appraise the realisation of each of the programmes, the pillars of EPODE – with addition of more detailed questions formulated by the evaluators – were used as implicit benchmarks. Specifically, criteria for each of the four EPODE pillars were developed along with their scoring scales.” (lines 240-243.)

Your Sincerely,

Krystallia Mantziki