Reviewer’s report

Title: Developing a coordinated Canadian post-secondary surveillance system: A Delphi Survey to identify measurement priorities for the Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey (CCWS)

Version: 0 Date: 11 Mar 2019

Reviewer: Bridgette Bewick

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting article. The following points were noted by this reviewer:

1. The title would benefit from inclusion of study design/method used. Currently the title suggests a theoretical piece and not the reporting of an empirical study.

2. Abstract would benefit from a sentence or two on background literature before stating the aims of the manuscript.

3. The appropriateness of the secondary aim is unclear. Given this is an academic piece of work suggest the second aim (as stated in the abstract) is removed.

4. Consider re-ordering the 9 core sections of the framework. It would seem sensible to place mental health assets and mental health deficits closer together in the list.

5. Not clear why the introduction begins with 'chronic diseases'. Line 29 which begins 'Poor mental health …' appears to be a more suitable introduction to the background section.

6. Line 77, it is unclear what is meant by 'student-led'.

7. Line 78, the discussion of future work would be better placed in the discussion section.

8. Line 82 and beyond, detail would be better placed in the method section.

9. Line 86-88. It is not clear if this is a purpose/aim of this particular manuscript. Suggest removing this secondary aim.

10. The methods would benefit from clear articulation of the research design. In particular a description of what makes this study a modified Delphi.

11. Line 92 reports on ethical approval and seems out of place with a section devoted to 'expert panel participants'.

12. It is not clear from the methods section if a total of 17 participants were invited (or if these are those who responded and a wider pool was invited). The invitation and participation numbers are confused. This section would benefit from greater clarity. I
suggest that the number who eventually participated would be better presented in the results and that the methods should only report on the number of participants invited and how they were chosen.

13. Suggest words such as 'moreover' are removed from the manuscript.

14. It is not clear from the methods section whether or not contributions were anonymous. That is were reminders targeted at individuals? If so the limitations of this approach should be considered in the discussion.

15. Detail is required on how the four population surveys used to generate the initial items were chosen.

16. It is not clear what is meant on line 141 by 'discuss considerations for implementing the CCWS'.

17. Line 157 suggests that the content included in the final core section framework was 'nearly identical' to the 9 sections generated at the start of the exercise. It is therefore not clear how the rankings were used to build a consensus? The aim of the Delphi exercise is not clear. Is it the case that although the sections were nearly the same the content of each section altered? Greater clarity is needed as to the impact of the Delphi exercise on the generation of content.

18. The results section is difficult to follow. It would be helpful if the authors took sections one at a time and explained how consensus was reached (or not) and what this meant for the generation of content.

19. It would be useful for the reader to understand where content was decided by the remote Delphi exercise and where decisions were largely based on the face-to-face meeting.

20. Can the authors explain what is meant by 'a nuanced approach' (line 182).

21. From line 184 provides a more coherent articulation of the content of the survey. It is not clear how the material before this (lines 156 to 183) sits within the sections detailed. The results section would benefit from a more coherent structure.

22. It is not clear how the Delphi informed decisions. For example Line 187-188 suggests that the lowest ranked item 'sense of meaning or purpose' was included despite the low rankings. It would be helpful if the method section could detail how consensus would be measured and decisions taken so the reader can understand how the final items were decided upon. Is it the case that the rankings put forward in the Delphi were essentially 'overturned' at the roundtable event?

23. Line 203 suggests it is the roundtable discussion that was most important for reaching consensus (and it is not clear how this fits or not with describing the study as a modified
Delphi). Without a clear description of the study design it is difficult to comment on the intended and implemented design.

24. It would be helpful to have more precise figures on the proportion/number of participants who agreed (or not). For example, line 207-208 'some panellists felt that this indicator should include …' and lines 227-228 'Some but not all groups retained anxiety and depression …'. More precise language when reporting is required throughout.

25. It is not always clear when results are based on the Delphi and when external factors influenced the decisions taken (e.g. Line 210 'Furthermore, many provinces and post-secondary institutions have recently developed policies and offices around these issues'). A clearer articulation of how decisions were reached is required throughout.

26. How consensus was reached it not clear. Nor is it clear how consensus was quantified (e.g. Line 212-215).

27. It would be helpful if the manuscript could provide an indication of the number of indicators retained or not (instead of a narrative which is difficult to follow Lines 217 onwards). Placing the detail in a table may help the reader to maintain a focus on the key points being articulated. It is not clear from the text which indicators were kept and why (and whether or not there was consensus about the content to be maintained).

28. It would be unusual to start a discussion with a suggestion that a paper is the 'first step'. I suggest the authors would be better to state what this individual study has achieved. The discussion of future plans would be better placed later in the discussion.

29. The summary of results starting line 301 provides a clear statement of the main findings. The reviewer suggests that a similar summary would be helpful in the results sections. While the reviewer acknowledges that the results will then need to go into further detail it is this overarching structure to the results which is missing and made the section difficult for the reader to follow.

30. Table 1 includes some information of use to the reader but it is not clear what it's purpose is. From the current structure of Table 1 it is not easy to see which indicators were included or not (and which evolved over time).

It is difficult for the reviewer to comment further on the discussion section due to the lack of clarity around how results were arrived at (i.e. how was consensus reached/decisions made).

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess
Does the work include the necessary controls?  
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?  
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Unable to assess

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?  
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

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