Reviewer's report

Title: Participatory Praxis as an Imperative for Health-related Stigma Research

Version: 1 Date: 12 Aug 2018

Reviewer: Laura Nyblade

Reviewer's report:

This is a thoughtful and well-written commentary on a critical issue.

I realize that because this is a commentary, the word-limit does not allow the authors to expand further on their arguments, but I was left wanting more. Perhaps this will generate another paper? In particular, I was left wanting more detail on the 'how-to' practicalities for each of the steps along the continuum (Figure 1), but most importantly for the ideal point of shared leadership, particularly in repressive and dangerous contexts. And more examples of how participatory praxis has been done successfully. I believe many of us researchers have good intentions and may think we are doing the 'right' thing, but in reality we are falling far short of the mark with respect to participatory praxis. One of the basic principles we've learned with respect to implementing stigma reduction over the years is that one of the first necessary steps is creating awareness of what stigma looks like in concrete terms. How we stigmatize through our actions and words. Many people do not intend to stigmatize, they simply are unaware that they are doing so. I think as researchers, we may also need some basic awareness building around participatory praxis--we may think we're engaging in it, but in reality we are not. So I was left wanting more concrete details on specific details of how to achieve participatory praxis (and what not to do), particularly if one is not a member of the community. How do we practically go about un-learning practices that instill hierarchy and distance? What are the specific structural changes in funding, training, promotion, publication and tenure processes that need to happen? How do you see those coming about/what needs to be done to achieve those? I was also left wondering--while striving to achieve shared leadership, are there ever any situations where it is acceptable to land somewhere along the continuum?

I look forward to reading more from the authors, though realize it will likely need to be in a separate paper given the nature and word-limits of a commentary.

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