Reviewer’s report

Title: Exploring the dynamics of food-related policy-making processes and evidence-use in Fiji using systems thinking

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Reviewer: Bing Wang

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HRPS-D-17-00032: Exploring the dynamics of food-related policy making processes and evidence-use in Fiji using systems thinking by Waqa et al.

The authors utilized Group Model Building and Causal Loop Diagrams approaches to identify the primary barriers to hinder effective utilization of evidence in the dynamic food-related policy making process, which allowed the guidance to promote effective policy decision making through the systems thinking approach. The power of using the systems thinking approach in was demonstrated through two food-related policy making cases through groups of Ministry of Health and Medical Services and Ministry of Agriculture in Fiji.

The authors didn't include the private sectors during the Group Model Building process, which left a limitation in providing comprehensive guidance in providing evidence-based policy decision making, as was discussed in the manuscript. I would be curious to see how the Causal Loop Diagram would change when new insights from relevant private stakeholders joining the discussion would be available.

In addition, during the policy decision making process, efforts and insights from internal and/or external advisory board are critical as well. It would be interesting to include that portion of the pie to represent the real-world policy making process.

Overall, the manuscript is well written and informative and fits well in the scope of HRPS. The implications of the research and ramifications of the findings are worthwhile for researchers, private stakeholders and regulatory personnel for their direct and indirect contributions to food-related policy making at a national level.

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