Reviewer's report

Title: Facilitators and Barriers to Effective Scale-Up of an Evidence-Based Multilevel HIV Prevention Intervention

Version: 3 Date: 31 October 2013

Reviewer: Peggy Dolcini

Reviewer's report:

MS: 1786103353103978
Title: Facilitators and Barriers to Effective Scale-Up of an Evidence-Based Multilevel HIV Prevention Intervention
Authors: Kegeles, Rebchook, Arnold, Tebbetts

This is an interesting and well-written manuscript that examines facilitators and barriers to effective implementation among 72 community-based organizations that had adopted the Mpowerment Project, a multilevel HIV prevention EBI designed for young gay and bisexual men. The study makes an important contribution to the field in that the work includes data from multiple sources within organizations over time. The study design, execution, and analytic approach are all strong. The comments below are intended to either clarify or to further strengthen an already strong manuscript.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The interior ring of the Durlak and DuPre model is labeled “Innovation Characteristics” and the revised version in the manuscript is “Intervention Characteristics.” Is this change purposeful?

Discretionary revisions

1. Although the data are qualitative in nature, there are no direct quotations included in the manuscript. This approach may have been chosen because some data are notes or comments by study staff. If there is a mechanism for including direct quotes in the results, it would increase the accessibility of the data. If this approach does not fit because of the structure of the data, a statement in the manuscript that addresses this would clarify the issue for readers.

2. As currently presented, it is not easy to discern whether some themes were more common than others. Identified themes appear to be of equal importance. Some clarification of the most common themes (or outlier themes) would be illuminating.

3. The agencies involved in the study differ in some interesting ways, including the extent to which the agency is devoted to HIV/AIDS issues and agency size. Did agency characteristics of this type impact implementation?
4. The Discussion might benefit from inclusion of additional HIV/AIDS implementation literature (e.g., Veniegas et al., 2009; Dolcini et al., 2010; Gandelman and Dolcini, 2012), which support some of the findings in the present study and/or which report on other translation efforts with Mpowerment (e.g., Miller et al, 2012).

5. The authors present an interesting modification of the Durlak and DuPre (2008) model in the Discussion. The revised model places several levels of staffing in the second ring of the figure, which is labeled ‘organizational issues.’ This revision also maintains the label ‘organizational capacity’ as a factor in the inner most ring (part of the prevention delivery system). It would be helpful to have some further clarification of the use of the terms ‘organizational issues’ and ‘organizational capacity’ and the degree to which these overlap (or not).

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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.