Reviewer’s report

Title: Rapid Sociometric Mapping of Community Health Workers to Identify Opinion Leaders using an SMS Platform: a short report

Version: 0 Date: 28 Mar 2017

Reviewer: Ivaylo Vassilev

Reviewer’s report:

Dear editors,

Thank you very much for asking me to review the short report entitled: Rapid Sociometric Mapping of Community Health Workers to Identify Opinion Leaders using an SMS Platform: a short report. I found the report interesting and thought it offered some very useful detail about using an innovative and cost-effective research technique in a resource poor environment.

However, I think the authors might be overstating what the report is offering. For example they seem to suggest that the work they report offers evidence about the usefulness of network based and mhealth interventions, which I don't think is the case. For example in the conclusion the authors state: 'Mobile technology can enable empirically guided, network-based interventions in near real time, thus opening the door to use of social forces to advance the science of implementation as well as promote the implementation of science in health delivery.' P.10 Such a conclusion I don't think is evidenced by what is presented in the report and would suggest that it should be dropped or substantially revised.

The described technique of identifying opinion leaders might be seen as a potentially useful addition to a broader implementation strategy for some interventions. However, the types of interventions that might benefit are in my opinion limited. For example, this research technique might be useful where the main implementation question is how to make sure that all health workers adopt an intervention or change behaviour. The actual concern is much more likely to be about the adoption and outcomes for the clients of the health workers and the described technique does not help in identifying potential influences for clients as they are not part of the studied networks. I think this should be clearly stated.

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