Reviewer’s report

Title: Five years' experience of an annual course on implementation science: an evaluation among course participants

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Reviewer: Ross Brownson

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting article in an area where there is not much literature. The evaluation has limitations yet is helpful in providing additional data on training approaches and effectiveness.

I have several comments and suggestions.

1. The PBL part of their course is perhaps the most innovative aspect. I would like to see more details on this approach, perhaps with a more detailed PBL example so others might replicate this method.


3. This previous study also evaluated a university course, so it would be useful to cite and discuss it: Norton WE. Advancing the science and practice of dissemination and implementation in health: a novel course for public health students and academic researchers. Public Health Rep. Nov-Dec 2014;129(6):536-542

4. Your introduction could more fully note that while there are numerous training programs, most are 3-5 day, short courses (TIDIRH, IRI) that cannot fully use the methods as in depth as those used in the current course.

5. It would be helpful to see a little more content of the course. For example, more details on the lectures could be shown in Box 1. Would the authors make the lecture slides available to readers interested in modeling the current approach?

6. Would you make the survey tools available as online additional files?
7. In Table 3, are any subgroup analyses possible (e.g., by sex, age, any other relevant characteristics of the students) that show different effects in different groups of students?

8. It is worth noting in the limitations section that you don't have longer-term indicators of academic (pubs, grants) or practice (new intervention approaches).

9. Did the course set out a specific set of competencies, for example see: Padek M, et al. Developing educational competencies for dissemination and implementation research training programs: an exploratory analysis using card sorts. Implement Sci. 2015;10:114. If not, this is a limitation.

10. Page 10: The section on Behaviour seems a little mismatched. The metrics used do not seem like behaviour change metrics (e.g., improved understanding). These seem more like knowledge metrics. A behaviour metric would be specific pre to post changes in how work is done, practices implemented, publications are written. It does not seem the design is strong enough to do justice to behaviour-related outcomes.

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