Reviewer’s report

Title: The sustainability of public health interventions in schools: a systematic review

Version: 2 Date: 02 Nov 2019

Reviewer: Aaron Lyon

Reviewer's report:

This is a second review of a manuscript describing a systematic review of factors influencing the sustainment of school-based health interventions. The manuscript remains important, adequately rigorous, and potentially impactful. If published, I look forward to citing it in my own work. The authors have been relatively responsive to reviewer feedback and presented an improved manuscript. The only major issue remaining is adequate attention to the restricted range of school-based health interventions included in the review. In response to previous reviewer feedback, the authors indicated that they excluded studies of services delivered by clinical providers. Even though clinical staff (school-employed or externally-employed) commonly provide healthcare services in schools, this is still a potentially reasonable criterion through which to narrow the sample of included studies. However, the authors do not provide justification for this choice and do not discuss its implications in the limitations section. Importantly, it seems that this decision may have resulted in primarily universal programs being identified (i.e., only 3 of the 24 studies included targeted interventions), given that universal programs are more likely to be delivered by educators rather than healthcare providers. However, aside from Table 1, no information about this finding appears in the results or discussion. This is important because some of the findings may have been influenced by this restricted range. For instance, health programming is considerably less likely to be aligned with the professional backgrounds, roles, and priorities of educators (who are principally focused on educational outcomes) than those of clinical staff. Further discussion of the justification for and implications of this inclusion criterion is warranted.

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