Reviewer’s report

Title: Providing culturally safe cancer survivorship care with Indigenous communities: study protocol for an integrated knowledge translation study

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Reviewer: Jamie Murdoch

Reviewer's report:

This is a very interesting piece of research with a clear need to develop implementation strategies to reduce cancer mortality within indigenous populations in Canada. However to be published I think the protocol needs some further work and I have the following comments.

I'm not clear on the distinction between the second and third study. You state that in the second study you are 'field testing community-based strategies'. However in the third study it also says 'we will field test nurses' implementation of cancer survivorship care with Indigenous Peoples.' Can you explain more clearly how each study complements the others and how this fits in the overall program of the research.

Related to this, there is a lot of information in the background about how indigenous people in Canada have worse cancer mortality and the reasons for this, but there is not enough on how the determinants of high mortality need to be addressed. This needs to be made explicit so that the series of studies and the objectives of the proposed study logically follow. If you are field-testing survivorship strategies in the second study then why do you need to find out survivorship strategies in the third and why is collaborative implementation needed?

The first objective seems to address two objectives, one about survivorship strategies and one about implementation. These either need to be separated or the connection made more explicit.

I'm not clear what a 'descriptive' participatory design entails and why this is suitable for this study. If you are developing implementation strategies then you will develop approaches based on a theoretical proposition about how the strategy/intervention will function. This requires more than description and calls for a level of interpretation to determine what strategies are required and how they will function to address which determinants of cancer mortality. Without this then why choose one approach over another?

I'm confused about the type of review being undertaken. Is it a systematic review or a narrative synthesis, or both? You state that the majority of research is descriptive so it doesn't seem like a
systematic review is being proposed which typically is associated with examining effectiveness of interventions.

For Research Question 2 I am not clear who and how participants will be selected for interview. Is it purposive sampling and if so how will this be done? Again, I don't see why a descriptive analysis is appropriate if you are developing an implementation strategy. There needs to be theoretical development about the conditions under which cancer survivorship can be successfully implemented.

For RQ3 are you really assessing the impact or are you evaluating how the survivorship strategies are being implemented, which tests out the implementation and theoretical fidelity of the strategy you have developed using evidence from the literature review and qualitative interviews? Again, there is a lack of explanation about how the sample will be selected, how the methods will be carried out and what the analysis will produce. The description of the 'process log' needs to go in the methods section for RQ3 so that it is clear how this will provide the evidence to address the outcomes. What will be recorded in the process log and will this be based on observations of implementation strategies or self-reported data?

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