**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** Achieving successful community engagement: A Rapid Realist Review

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 04 Dec 2017

**Reviewer:** Christine Urquhart

**Reviewer's report:**

This was an interesting, well written and relevant example of a rapid realist review. The minor essential revisions are:

1. The authors chose to use Scopus and EMBASE databases (both Elsevier). Although their choice is hardly surprising given their location in the Netherlands, I think some additional justification for the choice of those two databases would be desirable. I can guess why they were used, but other readers might wonder.

2. Line 135/6 there is a definition of community engagement that was used, but later (171) the authors refer to Rowe and Frewer's public participation level. Please reorganise so that both are together in the text and explain what is meant by public participation level.

3. Search strings (143) should be available as an appendix, together with the date limits.

4. In the reference to Table 3, CMOs are mentioned but mostly it is just Contexts and Mechanisms listed in the Table. This needs clarification as one or two example CMOs are provided with each guiding principle.

5. Line 399 should all be in italics.

6. The discussion did (thankfully) cover the problems of identifying CMOs. I admit that reading through the guiding principles and CMOs I felt that most of the Outcomes mentioned were actually process outcomes. Perhaps a bit more emphasis on this - otherwise a very helpful discussion on transparently trying to identify CMOs.

**Discretionary revisions**

1. I agree that the presentation of the guiding principles was fair, constructive and helpful. For health service managers and health professionals who are genuinely interested in making the changes the paper is helpful. I did just wonder whether some examples of what not to do - and why might happen as a consequence - would be helpful for those professionals who might need to present some strong warnings to their managers or colleagues. There were some mentions here and there but perhaps some of the limitations concern the fact that problems are rarely published (and that would be my experience of hospital/health service reorganisation consultations). Perhaps that's another paper.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**

If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**

If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**

If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.
Yes

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If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

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