Author's response to reviews

Title: Describing the impact of health research: a Research Impact Framework

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In an essentially applied area of research, there are particular pressures on health services researchers to
describe the impact of their work e.g. in grant proposals, project reports, consultancies, press releases and
research assessment exercises. One such instance is the upcoming UK Research Assessment Exercise.
However, specialised research impact assessments often require skills and resources beyond those
available to individual researchers. Ad hoc accounts impose a considerable burden to generate and may no
facilitate comparative analysis to inform research management, practice and assessment.

This paper describes a Research Impact Framework developed based on the research impact assessment
literature and an analysis of the impact of selected research projects at the London School of Hygiene and
Tropical Medicine. The descriptive categories in the Framework provide a series of prompts to help
researchers think through and present the significance of their work and these categories can be used as
appropriate to the relevant project or assessment criteria.

The Research Impact Framework was presented at a health services research conference and generated
interest and requests for copies of the framework. Making the Research Impact Framework freely available
was one of the main reasons behind the decision to submit this paper to an online journal. We hope that this
indication of potential readership interest will be of value to BMC Health Services Research as well.

[The different versions uploaded are due to the cover letter not being pdfd in the first version with
instructions from BioMed Central to upload this again. On doing so, however, there were some further
technical problems e.g. error messages on uploading and was advised by BMC customer services that
there had been problems with the site on the 24th July and to upload again.]