Reviewer's report

Title: Knowledge mobilization in the context of health technology assessment: an exploratory case study

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Reviewer: Marc Lemire

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined? This paper constitutes an original effort to conceptualize an approach to knowledge production and dissemination adapted to the mandate and nature of a health technology assessment (HTA) organization. Conceptualization of knowledge transfer (KT) to support decision-making isn't entirely new, but the question of appropriate model for specific contexts or typical organizations remains extremely relevant. Here, the question is defined in comparison with “dominants models”. In spite of some weaknesses identified farther, question is correctly defined.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work? Methods are appropriate but there is a need for more details and better justification. Authors introduce their method as an exploratory case study. It would be appropriate to indicate if it is the Agency which constitutes the case, or the projects of the Agency. Six projects were chosen “because it reflected different aspects of emerging practices of knowledge production and dissemination for decision-making, either by its context and the issues it raised, or the type of evidence collected, the modes of interactions adopted, the moment the stakeholders got involved in the process, or by the way the results were disseminated”. If those projects aren’t representative of all practices of the Agency, there is a need for a clearer justification of their selection. Moreover, the framework analysis should be more explicit as well as its justification. To give all those details will help the replication of work.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled? Yes, in the measure of a general qualitative approach. It would be appropriate to specify the analytical procedure by triangulation.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes. There is appropriate use of Table and Box. We invite the authors to specify and compare the originality or contribution of their results in light of previous research. See also comment below.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? The discussion is one of the most significant parts of this article. It is at this moment when the problem is the best argued and detailed. However, we would have better wished to seize the complexity of the problem from the introduction of the article (which dedicates only 5 lines to this subject, without
reference). This would deserve to be corrected.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. Since the question is defined in comparison with “dominants models” developed in the context of research organizations and funding bodies, a better identification of these dominant models would be desirable before defining their common or general characteristics. We need stronger and clearer comparative bases. Theoretical argumentation and methodological justification would be more persuasive with a KT literature overview.

2. Exploratory case study: although criteria of selection are briefly described it is not clear why these criteria. It should be justified and more expressly linked with case study objective.

3. Framework: it should be more explicit as well as its justification (or the reasons why dimensions of analysis are held), whether in light of preexistent works or with the objective of the case study.

Minor Essential Revisions

4. Specify the analytical procedure by triangulation.

5. Specify and compare the originality or contribution of the results in light of previous research.

6. Specify the problem with more details or reference works in the introduction part of the article.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests