Reviewer’s report

Title: Contribution Mapping: a method for mapping the contribution of research to enhance its impact

Version: 1  Date: 20 April 2012

Reviewer: Fadi El-Jardali

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Article Name: Contribution Mapping a method for mapping the contribution of research to enhance its impact

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
   Yes

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
   Yes

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
   Yes

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Yes but I have concerns about the length

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   Yes but require clear examples

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes

7. Is the writing acceptable?
   Yes, very well done.

This paper details a previously unexplored realm of research which happens to be the topic of one of the sessions of the Global Forum for Health Research (2012). This makes the publication of such an article very timely. I would like to commend the authors for putting together such a thorough and profound paper that captures Contribution Mapping. I have no doubt that this will be a paper that readers find most useful in trying to assess the process and contribution of research.

What makes it even more interesting is the growing emphasis on knowledge
translation and the need to translated evidence into policy by using tools such as policy briefs and policy dialogues. While evidence is being generated on the effectiveness of those methods, little evidence yet exist on the outcome and impact of applying those tools to influence policies. While the focus has been on the impact of the update of evidence into outcomes, little attention has been given to the process and contribution of research. And this is another reason why this paper is relevant and timely and would help guide the debate.

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
- One critical issue lies in the length of the paper which makes it a bit hard to follow particularly with such a novel concept.
- It would be useful that authors discuss the steps of Contribution Mapping in the discussion and whether the users may expect any challenges in some stages. The stages require different degrees of effort as each is done by a different set of individuals but they all require a great degree of commitment. Maybe this should be highlighted in some way.
- I would have liked to see a conclusion that details the importance of Contribution Mapping and how it can contribute to enhancing the evaluation of the contribution of research.
- It would be interesting to see how the steps can be implemented in action. Perhaps a true example about their applicability would be useful
- It would be good to refer or derive lessons from applying the proposed methods and what were the results. Are there specific examples of how those methods were employed in certain contexts/ countries
- It would be useful to outline clearly and simply the approach to monitor the contribution of research into action.
- It would be useful for the paper to refer to the growing evidence that is being generated from knowledge translation activities and the use of systematic reviews to provide guidance to policy makers
- I find that the discussion about the alignment between the production of research and the policy relevant priorities interesting. However, it would be useful to refer and discuss how this can be done at a country level. In other words, is it by engaging policy makers in periodic priority setting exercises that will identify priorities? I think one challenge lies in the capacity to translate those priorities into ‘reseachable research questions’ which can be undertaken through research. In addition, to the incentives that need to be put in place to motivate researchers to respond to those priorities and to shape their research agenda, including funding opportunities.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
- On page 6, there is a small typo in the sentence “may temporarily stabilize and continue in another phases” Authors are advised to correct the word “another” to “other”
- Another typo on page 15 “They origin and formulation of the project is explored”, authors are advised to correct the word “they” to “the”

Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)
- None

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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