Reviewer's report

Title: Common Understanding or Implementation Gap? The Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research & Care (CLAHRC) as a Policy, Programme and Organisational Response to the "second translational gap"

Version: 1 Date: 30 April 2012

Reviewer: Michael Hill

Reviewer's report:

This sound article is a little too vague about its objectives. Hence it requires three improvements:

(1) Stylistically It needs to set out where it is going very clearly from the outset. The 'background' paragraphs (and to some extent even the synopsis) are to some extent back to front. There need to be a clear 'this article will...' approach in both places.

(2) The crucial contribution of the article is its exploration of what it calls the 'translation gap'. There is a need to set out very clearly early in the piece exactly what that gap was seen to be (in the Cooksey review etc.) so that the discussion of what happened can then be reported quite explicitly in terms of that gap. In other words the term 'translation' gap must be made quite explicit.

It is also not clear whether the authors regard 'translation gaps' as exactly the same as 'implementation gaps'. The latter term is used in the title but appears little in the text. An implementation gap is surely a gap between intention and practice, while translation gap here seems to involve something less clear which of course may contribute to an implementation gap.

(3) The use of both of these gap concepts implies some clarity about both intentions and outputs. I am not sure that these are shown here. The discussion of a 'natural experiment' is interesting but not followed through very well. The problem about the use of 'gap' in this discourse is the way it implies clear goals and implementers who may or may not obey them. But what is going on in a situation like this seems to be that everyone is feeling their way towards the best approach. Policy development is then best seen as 'incremental'.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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 I have no competing interests.