Reviewer’s report

Title: Status, challenges and facilitators of consumer involvement in Australian health and medical research

Version: 1 Date: 20 September 2010

Reviewer: rosemary barber

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This is an interesting paper in an important and under researched area. I am not aware of a similar Australian investigation. The questions are clearly defined and the findings will be of interest to a number of people, including researchers, consumers, policy makers and research funders.

Discretionary Revisions

1. Under 'Method', Participants and sample size’, it would be helpful to know what the inclusion and exclusion criteria were for participation in the study.
2. Under ‘Method’, ‘Participants and sample size’, is it possible to be more precise about the “one or more of the directories”?
3. It would be useful to provide references to substantiate some of the statements e.g. under ‘Background’, the sentence beginning “Justification for universal progress in health science is motivated by …”, under ‘Discussion’ “There is, in theory, wide acceptance of the potential benefits of involving consumers in health and medical research in Australia” and “The part played by science is becoming more influential”.
4. Given the perceived importance of facilitators such as guidelines and training (as well as evidence of organisational benefit), it would be interesting to address these issues in the Discussion. For instance, is guidance on consumer involvement in research widely available in Australia?
5. The manuscript would benefit from closer scrutiny e.g. under ‘Background’, second paragraph, should it be ‘The effects of health science research’, rather than ‘the effects of health science’? In the penultimate line, ‘it’ should be replaced by ‘them’.
6. I did not understand a few sentences e.g. under ‘Background’, third paragraph “…realistic game plan” and “improving the overall understanding of the solution.” In Table 1, I do not know what ‘Other (not applicable – laboratory)’ means.

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 that I have no competing interests.