Reviewer’s report

Title: Mechanisms and pathways to impact in public health research: A preliminary analysis of research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)

Version: 0 Date: 14 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Mandy Cheetham

Reviewer's report:

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The nature of, and pathways to, impact are important areas of study. The authors approach to selecting NIHR funded studies and exploring their reported impacts in Researchfish is useful. However, the paper is limited by its lack of engagement with relevant literature in the fields of knowledge exchange, knowledge mobilisation and complex systems. Many of the findings are not novel, but well established in the existing literature. For this reason, the paper's potential is not realised. It could be improved with a more nuanced analysis of the data, to reflect the similarities and differences between the approaches taken in the studies selected.

Methodologically, the workshop was a good opportunity to explore the findings with a wider audience, but this was so small, it is difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions. No explanation is offered for the low levels of participation. There is no mention of ethical approval being sought for the workshop attendees or the interviews with PIs.

Assuming this is in place, the paper requires substantial revisions to take account of recent developments in the field. The references in this fast developing field need updating.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
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Unable to assess
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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