Reviewer's report

Title: Factors contributing to the effectiveness of health impact assessments in Australia and New Zealand

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Reviewer: JM (Lea) den Broeder

Reviewer's report:

1) general remark: This is an interesting paper, and helpful to many who are engaged in (research concerning) Health Impact Assessment. The authors have made very clear why the topic they studied is relevant and have applied a thorough approach. I have read the paper with great pleasure, it is well written.

2) Major compulsory revision. Although the paper describes the 4 phases of their study, the results they present are mainly the results of the interviews, i.e. phase 3. This could be stated more clearly in the paper; if the authors would do so right at the start that would be helpful for the reader.

3) Major compulsory revision. Related to 2), although this paper is essentially about phase 3, triangulation of data is mentioned in line 135 - presumably referring to the data from the other study phases. It would be helpful and informative to know how this triangulation was done.

4) Major compulsory revision. In line 273 the paper mentions a statistically significant relation between HIA procedures (community engagement) and effectiveness (as experienced by practitioners). The statistical methods are not described in the paper. This needs to be repaired, or, in case the methods were described in one of the earlier papers (ref 9 and 10) at least those reference should be added here. As it is now, mentioning statistical significance in the middle of this paper that is about a piece of qualitative research seems a bit out of place.

5) Minor essential revision. The structure of the paper would benefit if the headings were adapted. As it is now, 'results and discussion' are a subheading under 'Methods' (which is unusual), and after that there is again a heading 'Discussion'. This is somewhat confusing.

Level of interest: An article of importance 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