Author’s response to reviews

Title: Capacity building of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Researcher Workforce: A narrative review

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Author’s Response to the Editors

The editorial board agree with the high quality of the manuscript, but at the same time we are curious about the relevance of the focus specifically to the human resources for health research workforce. The manuscript as presently written focuses on the research workforce. This is somewhat tangential to the overall mandate of the journal to focus on the health workforce more broadly. We are keen to see if you are able to make the manuscript more specific to the HRH focus of the journal - in the abstract, introduction, examples provided and in the conclusion. That is to say, we are not saying to completely reorient the work entirely but rather to make it easier for the readership of the HRH journal to see the relevance to their work. If you would like to proceed in this fashion, we will send the reviews to assist in this regard.

Response: Thank you for sending the reviews. We have oriented the manuscript much more towards the general health workforce, by addition of the following passages:

For the abstract –

“Further development of the Indigenous health researcher workforce is necessary to realise more effective health policies and a more robust health workforce.”

For the introduction –

“Building capacity of the Indigenous health researcher workforce creates a well-rounded and stronger working environment in Indigenous health, and challenges inherent research foci towards Indigenous led health priorities. Research is fundamental to informing decisions on how to improve quality of health services [11], and local health workforces rely on research to back their requests for public health resourcing, such as staffing for sustained health care delivery
The work that Indigenous health researchers do informs, guides and critiques policy, which further influences how Indigenous health policy is delivered [9]. Leadership of Indigenous researchers in accumulating evidence of the cultural inappropriateness of much health care service delivery and addressing this core aspect of health care quality via policy reform [13, 14] is one of many examples of the importance of the research workforce to supporting resources and performance of the wider health workforce.”

Within the discussion –

“The literature reviewed raises several ways that capacity building of the research workforce facilitates capacities of the wider health workforce to better serve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There were examples of newly research-trained community members deciding to enrol in university degrees to become health professionals [38]. As described in Nichols et al. [12] research learning can have immediate flow on effects in the capacity of Indigenous health professionals in the primary care sector to more effectively demonstrate the value of their health program approach to local community, senior personnel in their service organisation and external funders of services. As a further example, closer relationships of local Indigenous communities with health care providers are enabled by Indigenous-led research on health-related matters [22]. Overall, Indigenous peoples conducting research do vital work in improving infrastructure of the broader health workforce, such as in frontline service delivery environments.”

In the concluding paragraph –

“Robustness of the Indigenous health workforce is well served by facilitated growth in the number of Indigenous health researchers.”

Authors’ Response to Reviewers

Reviewer #1:

I enjoyed reading this paper, and found it informative and in particular, sufficient in detail to contribute to others' interested in exploring specific elements but also in presenting a coherent representation of funding investment and outcomes. It was appreciated that the impetus for the study was included, and this enhances an understanding of the study design.

Response: We thank the reviewer for the comments.

I minor note, in some instances, database is mis-typed as 'data base'.

Response: This typo has been corrected.
Thinking about the international audience of this journal, it may assist readers if some reference to Australia was included in the abstract.

Response: Australia is now referred to in the opening sentence of the abstract: “This paper, situated in Australia, provides a narrative review thatscopes and integrates the literature on the extension and strengthening of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researcher workforce.”

Likewise, for that audience - recognising the inclusion of global gaps/opportunities in Table 5 and page 12, whether some consideration of the application of these study findings to others may be an enhancement to the article and its publication in this journal.

Response: We thank the reviewer for pointing out the need to internationalise our findings more. As we feel that Table 4 is particularly of pertinence internationally, we added a paragraph on potential applications in regards to that one:

“In turning to the global level, the research model characteristics that we have identified as associated with the most effective capacity building (Table 4) should be considered in the planning and design of research learning systems in other countries. The list of characteristics also provides a basis for international research on how extendable they are to capacity building in other health research contexts.”

Reviewer #2: Excellent paper. Thank you for allowing me to review your writing. I have embedded a few online resources within the attached pdf.

Response: We thank the reviewer for these comments. We are interested in seeing and considering the resources, but could not locate/find the pdf that is being referred to.

A few general points (in no particular order but numbered for clarity):

1. Consistently apply Oxford commas.

Response: Oxford commas have been inserted throughout the manuscript, where relevant.

2. Review the punctuation required for bulleted and numbered lists and be consistent with their application.

Response: Punctuation has been amended and consistency improved for these lists (e.g. p. 3).

3. Ensure your verb tense is consistent in a paragraph.

Response: Within-paragraph use of tense has been checked and amended where necessary.
4. There is a difference between the use of that and which.

Response: More proper use of that/which has been applied to the manuscript.

5. You mentioned coding in the data extraction. Can you please add more detail related to the software package used (if any)?

Response: The software used was Microsoft Word. Given the tight word count and that this is a commonly used type of software, we would prefer to leave out this information.

6. Avoid the use of scare quotes.

Response: scare quotes have been removed.

7. Table 5 contains important information but it is difficult to navigate.

Response: Table 5 has been restructured to aid navigation of the content, by way of a separate column for area of research capacity building on the left.