Reviewer’s report

Title: Paramedics, poetry and film: health policy and systems research at the intersection of theory, art and practice

Version: 0 Date: 05 Feb 2019

Reviewer: Susan Nancarrow

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this fairly unique submission (in my experience) to HRH. The film footage is professionally presented, tells a moving story, and is interesting. It is helpful to have the written translation alongside it and on the footage. I read and watched this submission with a very open mind because I strongly support the use of narratives in creating meaning and messages, and am very interested in the use of multi-media to portray complex concepts.

As it is presented, I don't think the submission makes the necessary translation from the narrative / story telling to an academic piece of work. The submission is primarily focused around the film and narrative, but it lacks the theoretical context and interpretation to move this into an academic domain. It is akin to having lots of results, without the background or methodology to support them. I believe that the following are needed to move this from predominantly a creative / narrative work to an academic paper:

1. Theoretical background and justification about the problem (the issues faced by paramedics)

2. Theoretical background to justify the use of the multi-media / narrative approach, and to clarify what it is attempting to achieve, and for whom and a description of how this was achieved (basically a methodology)

3. Ideally, some data to demonstrate the impact of the work on the intended audience/s. To a certain extent, this is intrinsic in the video (with the audience feedback), however this is not discussed in the paper.

4. Some discussion about the wider relevance of this work. For instance, how can this method and these findings be used to drive change / inform new approaches etc. How else have similar approaches been used and by whom (references). What is the original contribution that this piece is making?

5. Given the visual footage, there are ethical issues that need to be addressed - both from the perspective of the participants (how was consent obtained, how is anonymity assured), but also from a viewer perspective - there are potentially upsetting scenes. How would the authors address this and alert viewers to potentially confronting content?
6. There is also the issue of potential bias in the presentation of footage. If this was a piece of qualitative research, the issues of selection bias and researcher reflexivity would be explicitly addressed. As this is a piece of narrative footage which is trying to tell a story, it is likely that footage and stories are selected to make specific points. These are very different approaches and some acknowledgement of the researcher position and objectivity (or otherwise) is necessary to clearly position this work.

For this submission to be successful, I believe that the written paper should be able to stand-alone as a theoretical paper with the support of the footage / narrative.

I would be very interested to see these issues addressed because this potentially creates a new paradigm for communicating complex academic ideas (particularly of relevance to HRH). I appreciate that this is a relatively unusual methodology and approach, and this could be a seminal piece of work to help address / overcome / acknowledge some of those challenges.

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An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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