Reviewer's report

Title: The NIHR Public Health Research Programme: Responding to Local Authority Research Needs in the United Kingdom

Version: 1 Date: 4 June 2015

Reviewer: Jonathan Grant

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Major Compulsory Revisions (subject to editorial review)

This is a descriptive paper of the projects funded by the NIHR PHP. As currently written it comes across as an 'advertorial' for the programme and has no or very little analytical content or self reflection. In and of itself the paper is fine ie it provides a clear summary of the projects funded through the programme. For this reason I think the editors need to decide whether this is the type of paper they wish to publish, hence caveating my conclusion with 'subject to editorial review'.

That said I would like to see much more analytical content, for example:

1. A table or graph of the 79 projects distributed by the nine King's Fund themes and the exclusion in the text of imprecise statements like a "range of projects", I want to know how many,

2. An exploration of demand and success rates by themes (was there a lack of demand/applications for themes? This tells us something about the capacity to address questions)

3. Difference between the commissioned led projects and the researcher led ones.

4. Some reflective thoughts about the prioritisation processes (do they work, what are they based on - there is a body of literature on this). Are the King's fund themes applicable?

5. Some forward looking assessment on how you are going to assess the impact of these projects - have they delivered the programmes aims?

These are more illustrative and there are more.

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