Reviewer's report

Title: Evidence-based policymaking is not like evidence-based medicine, so how far should you go to bridge the divide between evidence and policy?

Version: 0 Date: 24 Jan 2017

Reviewer: Catherine Needham

Reviewer's report:

I enjoyed reading this opinion piece. It does a good job of bringing policy theory into the space of EBM to help scientists move beyond calling for better dissemination as the way to get more robust science into policy. It's engagingly written with a helpful range of examples and literature.

I have a few minor comments which will aid readability:

- I found the structure confusing, with different levels of headers being used in a way that I couldn't easily follow because they were intermingled with two questions, two messages, two dilemmas, two debates and three models.

- the claim that the authors drew on semi-structured interviews but did not draw on them in the conclusions was confusing for the reader and needs to be clarified.

- I bridled somewhat at the description of 'simple qualitative stories'. I'm sure the authors don't see qualitative research as necessarily simple, although it did point to a broader binary in the article between research at the top of the evidence hierarchy and simplified, emotive stories told by and to politicians. There is a lot in that gap, indeed some of the later examples fit well into it. I recognise though that as an opinion piece it may work best to preserve that binary.

- The three models at the end are set up as showing us the 'constraining effect of a rigid attachment to "fidelity"'. However that wasn't the message I got from the examples. Rather it was that health interventions are very broad and some lend themselves better to
certain kinds of implementation. FNPs seem to have worked well as an RCT style intervention.

- What to me seemed to be missing from the article (but this is my opinion and may not be yours) is that RCTs have an enormous cache in government, including with politicians, to the extent that the danger is we are using them too much rather than too little, as proposed by Ben Goldacre et al.

**Level of interest**
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

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

Acceptable

**Declaration of competing interests**
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?
If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal