Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Gaps and Strategies in Developing Health Research Capacity: Experience from the Nigeria Implementation Science Alliance

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 27 Oct 2017

**Reviewer:** Pavel Ovseiko

**Reviewer's report:**

This is a rigorous paper on developing health research capacity in Nigeria, one of the most populous low and middle income countries (LMICs) in Africa. This paper promises to become an extremely important contribution to the literature on increasing health research capacity in LMICs. However, there are several compulsory revisions that the authors need to make before this paper could be considered for publication. There are also two discretionary revisions that the authors may want to consider.

**COMPULSORY REVISIONS**

Research involving human subjects, human material, or human data, must have been performed in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and must have been approved by an appropriate ethics committee: [https://www.biomedcentral.com/getpublished/editorial-policies#ethics+and+consent](https://www.biomedcentral.com/getpublished/editorial-policies#ethics+and+consent)

The authors state that ethics approval and consent to participate are not applicable. This is probably because, as the methods section suggests, they analysed de-identified data and reported aggregated results, and so on these grounds their research was exempt from a full ethics approval process. If so, it is necessary to state this in the manuscript.

Likewise, the authors state that consent for publication is not applicable. This is probably it was obtained as part of the participants agreement to participate in the workshop. If so, this needs to be explained in the manuscript.

It is commendable that the authors share their data in the supplementary material file. Given that the supplementary material contains individual names, it is necessary to mention how consent for publication was obtained. Usually participants can withdraw their consent retrospectively, which may not be possible once the supplement has been published. For this reason, the authors may want to seek advice from their ethics committee and abstain from publishing the supplementary file in its current form. I suggest publishing a blank data collection form and explain that anonymised data would be available on request from the corresponding author.

Finally, the References section requires editing to ensure the consistency of style across all references, e.g. doi numbers.
DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

The Results section of the Abstract misses the opportunity to report the key findings of the paper pertaining to the recurrent themes for gaps and strategies. Space permitting, the authors may want to mention these in the Results section of the Abstract.

The authors can strengthen reporting of their qualitative research by using the most relevant elements of the Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): http://intqhc.oxfordjournals.org/content/19/6/349.long

In particular, it would be helpful to address reflexivity, i.e. how the authors' background and experiences might have influenced the interpretation of data.

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