Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 0 Date: 07 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Sue Kinn

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There is some potential interest in this area of work, but it is not suitable for publication as it stands and required further work.

The results section is very sketchy and do not give a clear indication of what was found. There is one table with top level summaries of the themes agreed, but little indication about how they were arrived at. The Figure 1 does show something of the process, but there is a need for more detail.

The themes in the table are very high level and the strategies provided are not very helpful for overcoming challenges or making the most of potential opportunities. For example gap 1 is lack of sufficient funding for research and strategy 1 is increased funding for research. This is not very constructive and the discussion does not develop the gap/strategy analysis in the table and discuss ways that this can be implemented. This is true of many of the items listed in the table. The results should expand on the themes, what is covered and what detailed strategies were proposed. The discussion can then take the gaps and strategies and discuss how the solutions proposed can be translated into something practical and sustainable, the stakeholders, infrastructure, incentives and other factors that are all involved.

The discussion does include a number of the gap/strategies but not all that are covered in the table and there is no reference to any evidence about experience of the strategies or applying some of the solutions. If there is no evidence available to back up the solutions being discussed this should be clearly stated. For example there is some discussion about increasing education about research, or making research a factor to be considered for promotions - is there any evidence to back up these suggestions - has it been tried elsewhere and does it work? In line 246 it states 'is believed to be' - but we really need something that refers to evidence and if that is not available - then a statement about ... no evidence available but this might be one option to .... or something similar.

There is reference to some work supported by TDR in Mali - but this is rather obscure and needs to be made clearer, anyone who has not heard of TDR will probably not understand the relevance of this statement.
There needs to be a section which covers the limitations of the study and some indication of potential ways forward to try to implement some of the strategies outlined.

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Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of limited interest

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

Acceptable

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