Reviewer’s report

Title: Health researchers’ experiences, perceptions, and barriers related to sharing study results with participants

Version: 0 Date: 21 Dec 2018

Reviewer: Heather Came

Reviewer's report:

Kia ora

Thanks for the opportunity to review your work. It is an interesting paper that alarms me about the practices of some of our colleagues. As a reader I want to know the viewpoint of the authors on the issue they are investigating. I would love to see some minimum and best practice guidelines in relation to feeding back to participants. I think the paper would be strengthened by engaging with the indigenous sovereignty data literature.

Other points for your consideration:

I am used to an ethics process where dissemination to participants is a requirement. Is this not the case in the USA? It might be useful to contextualise your study more clearly in the USA for those of us not familiar with your system.

You have clearly outlined your method but not your methodology; this might be useful to include.

I find it unusual that you have calculated frequency in relation to particular themes. (p6). Can you please include a reference or explanation to explain this approach to your qualitative data.

As a critical scholar mainly doing qualitative research as part of my methodological approach my engagement with participants is ongoing; we are part of the same community. I suspect the methodological approach one takes to research, impacts on how findings are feedback and its relative importance. Was this addressed in your study? Indigenous research methodologies for instance are often relational.

P7 Did you do an analysis of the ethnic makeup of correspondents? If not why not?

P8 "Among the specific studies where results were not shared with participants, 13.6% of
186 respondents had told participants that they would receive results”. Is it not problematic and unethical for researcher to lie to participants? Is there a professional body for health researchers that this information needs to be reported to?

P9 why would researchers not include in their budget money to feedback to participants? Is this not a requirement of health funders and ethics committees?

Why would researchers need incentives to feedback to participants? Without participants they couldn't do research. If they don't know how to engage with participants are they competent to be doing the research with them? This could be discussed in your discussion - alarm bells are ringing for me.

"concerns about how participants will understand or use the results" - is it not the researchers responsibility to explain the findings in a manner participants understand. If the participants can't understand how did they give informed consent?

P12 The paternalism of the researchers who choose not to share results is distressing to me as their global colleague.

P13 why would participants have to explicitly ask for the findings? Should access to the findings not be covered during the informed consent process?

I don't understand how receiving findings from a study you participate in can cause harm or bias future research? Please clarify.

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