Reviewer’s report

Title: How are evidence generation partnerships between researchers and policy makers enacted in practice? A qualitative interview study

Version: 0 Date: 20 Dec 2018

Reviewer: Tarang Sharma

Reviewer's report:

General comments: A very interesting and valuable piece of research conducted by the authors.

Main comment is though I can see how the results of this study could be generalisable - it would be good to highlight that:
* the sample size of 18 is small (limitation of the study) maybe highlight within the discussion where you talk about a non-random sample;
* highlight that the sample was all from New South Wales, Australia (in case there are some structural interactions between researchers and policy makers native to NSW in Aus, which are not transferable to other settings e.g. LMIC etc):

Abstract:
* Would be good to highlight within the methods bit that key informant interviews were conducted with key informants from the NSW region of Australia and have the conclusions framed in that context.
* Would be good to highlight within the results section the different themes that emerged from the interviews as the findings of the study, the current emphasis is more on the Co-production, would be good to see a summary line for research initiated and policy initiated partnerships from Table 1 and 2 also included within the results as well as a short summary line about the answers to (from main body pages 16-18):
  o what success in partnerships look like and;
  o the components of successful partnerships.
Please see the comments in the methods/results section for more on this, the abstract results can then mirror that.

Main Paper

Background: A very thorough background to set the scene for the study.

Methods/results:
* The methods say that no pre-determined framework was used, and themes were generated inductively. However, the paper also highlights that the research questions were the following:
  1. Why do researchers and policy makers choose to work together? What are the perceived benefits? 2.
How do they work together? Which partnership models are most common? 3. What are the key a) relationship-based and b) practical components of successful research partnerships? The results are also broken down into answers to these questions with some additional themes. This makes it unclear what themes finally emerged under which of the research questions. I would propose starting the results section with structuring the results so the reader knows a total of xx themes emerged x for research question 1, y for research question 2 and za and zb for research questions 3a and 3b with the details under that framing.

* It would be good to include the guide for the semi-structured interviews as an appendix/ online document to the manuscript

Discussion:
* Highlight limitations after the strengths, ….the small sample size and location limited to NSW (where the sample is discussed) - and that the conclusions should be framed within that context.

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

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