Reviewer’s report

Title: How do organisations implement research impact assessment (RIA) principles and good practice? A narrative review and exploratory study of four international research funding and administrative organisations

Version: 1 Date: 22 Oct 2019

Reviewer: Anders Brantnell

Reviewer's report:

Review of: "How do research organisations implement research impact assessment (RIA) principles and good practice? A narrative review and exploratory study of four international funders. HRPS-D-19-00165R1

Thank you for your resubmission and revision. I can see that you have improved several aspects based on the reviewers' comments. The manuscript is clear, interesting and well written. However, I have some issues left that can improve the rigor and transparency of the research. I will elaborate on these issues below.

Background

1. Line 72. The Journal name is wrong, please check the reference and change the journal name in accordance.

Methods

2. Lines 219-221. You write that you grouped the findings under three broad domains. However, this structure is not used when reporting findings. I think it would be easier for the reader to understand if you would actually follow this structure when reporting findings. In this way the reader would get a clear picture of knowledge and gaps concerning structures, processes and outcomes.

3. Line 246 and onwards. You write that you used semi-structured interviews based on a topic guide and that your approach was inductive. However, your topic guide is based on Donabedian domains, and thus I cannot see in which way your approach was inductive and explorative. Please clarify.

4. Line 250. You write that you based your analysis on grounded theory, but you do not have any references to grounded theory. Also, I have difficulties to see how your approach is grounded theory as you started with Donabedian domains and collected data based on those domains, your findings report on Donabedian domains and some subcategories and in the end, you do not develop any theory. Please clarify how you define grounded theory. I don't think that you need to use grounded theory but if you decide to do this more explanation on how you define and build grounded theory is needed.
Findings

1. Line 288, Table 2. Not sure why you state the anticipated/implied focus of future reporting. For me this is confusing and does not add anything to the findings. Also, you do not comment these grey areas somehow in the findings. Please reconsider goal of showing these and if needed explain more in the findings.

2. All findings. You state that your ethics approval hinders you of showing which funder said what. I understand that you need to comply with your ethics approval. However, I still think that the rigor of this study could be increased tremendously if you could somehow show that your data actually is used in the findings section and supports your arguments. Your sample size is small and thus this issue becomes even more important. One way to do this is to indicate only funder 1, 2, 3 or 4 when you write funder, interviewee etc. I don't think you would compromise your ethics by doing this. You actually reveal some of the funders in lines 436 when you write larger funders we interviewed… Also, you reveal the health research funders on line 442 and onwards.

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

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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:

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