Reviewer's report

Title: A Mixed Methods Examination of Knowledge Brokers and their Use of Theoretical Frameworks and Evaluative Practices

Version: 1 Date: 23 Dec 2019

Reviewer: Kara Decorby-Watson

Reviewer's report:

I see original comments addressed in this revised version. I am suggesting minor revisions mainly for clarity on who study participants were, how they were selected, and so the reader can be clear on how that influences their (own) interpretation of the paper's findings. It isn't clear yet what types of titles may have meant someone was included vs. excluded from the interviews or survey, and how they were screened for inclusion/exclusion, if screening happened. Broad categories of titles in Table 1 are extremely diverse (Senior Management/Director/Manager; Educator/Professor/Student; Healthcare Professional; Knowledge(Broker/Exchange/Management/Mobilization/Translation/Facilitator); Research/Policy). Given this diversity, it would be difficult for the reader to assess what kind of distinctions would have qualified a participant as a 'knowledge broker', which is the term used in the paper. Individual comments below are very minor and I think this concept is the most important thing to clarify.

- P 7 lines 11 "inhere" use as verb and 45 "These, then, are…” - this paper uses some formal language that doesn't support clear communication principles. I think in knowledge translation, we're trying for clear communication. Since writing style is really subjective I'm not suggesting this is a requirement to revise, but would like to propose we try to use clear communication principles to write about KT.

- P11 first paragraph, last sentence needs a citation
- P13 line 11 "Such analysis enabled us to increase the trustworthiness of our qualitatively derived conclusions." Quantitative data are not needed to validate qualitative data, in the same way that you would not say that qualitative data set could validate statistics. They answer a completely different question. QuaN data don't offer quaL trustworthiness so this sentence needs revision. The use of multiple data sources can help strengthen conclusions. But I think the wording in this version is still implying that quantitative data are helping validate the qualitative data. I agree with the explanation about the use of quantitative data to embellish (Creswell) but the use of quantitative data to validate or improve trustworthiness or imply qual data aren't trustworthy "enough" on their own. They are providing completely different information about the same phenomenon to paint a more complete picture.

- P13 - "The survey and interview parts of the study were carried out sequentially due to personnel availability." - this still isn't clear to me which was done first (makes it sound as if surveys were first and then interviews, which conflicts with what was described in the methods about survey data being used to "embellish" the interview findings?

- P14 line 40 "As shown in Table 1, over a third of respondents reported a job title explicitly related to a KB role" - Your methodology section (p8, line 47) states that "As this study focused on understanding the practices of Canadian KBs, its recruitment strategy focused on KBs practicing in the Canadian healthcare landscape. Selected based on their job titles…" This language implied to me that their job title would have to have been "knowledge broker" or very similar to knowledge broker. Again on page 13, text implies participants were KBs ("To preserve the participants' anonymity in a field where many knowledge brokers know each other, their characteristics are not reported." However, it's strange to me to read later in your findings that only over a third of participants recruited actually had a job title that was explicitly related to a KB role. So a few things: 1) there's no explanation of how you knew they would have been eligible if you included any job title (and if not, how did you focus on particular titles or screen through titles), 2) although I know you indicated your confident that participants were not identifiable by title, given there aren't that many KB titles, that might not be the case for certain organizations where there are 1-2 KBs, and 3) there doesn't seem to be a 'validation' of whether those who volunteered or were recommended were functioning as KBs if their job titles weren't that of "knowledge brokers". On first read I had made the assumption based on the selection by job title and sentence before saying knowledge brokers that those who participated had the job title of knowledge brokers. This needs more explanation and consistency.
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