Reviewer's report

Title: How do third sector organisations use research and other knowledge? A systematic scoping review.

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Reviewer: robin miller

Reviewer's report:

In trying to pull together the available evidence on use of knowledge by TSOs working in health and social care this article attempts to fill an important and large gap in our current understanding. The methodology is appropriate and explained clearly which enables the reader to have confidence in what made the final inclusion list.

Major compulsory revisions

However, the overall nature of the task can be questioned - is it possible to group together such a diverse group of organisations (which will include small community based providers relying on charitable donations and voluntary efforts) which large entrepreneurial ones which have major government contracts and volunteering largely on their boards, along with all those who work in the very different areas within and between health and social care (with key issues regarding the cultural and professional backgrounds within them), And to that heady mix can be added the differences between countries. It may be that sufficient similarity and synthesis can be done, but the article does not currently convince that this is the case and this needs to be addressed.

The analysis is essentially framed around the focus of the studies, with the studies presented in sequential order. With the very different nature of the studies this makes it quite hard work for the reader to try and pick out and compare the findings. I wonder if it would be better instead to synthesise findings regarding different supports and barriers from across the studies?

It is not clear how the use of research etc by TSOs differs (or not) from health and social care organisations within private and public sectors - perhaps some initial overview of this literature, followed by your findings and then a comparison would add more depth?

Minor essential revisions

You exclude social enterprise from your definition of third sector organisations - SE are often included in this definition (and may be in some of the reviews that you mention)? Indeed many if not most TSOs in UK would meet the definition of a social enterprise even if they do not choose to take that label.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests