Reviewer's report

Title: Teasing apart 'the tangled web' of influence of policy dialogues: Lessons from a case study of dialogues about healthcare reform options for Canada

Version: 1 Date: 05 Apr 2017

Reviewer: Bev Holmes

Reviewer's report:

Thanks for the opportunity to re-review this paper on policy dialogues, which is much improved from the first version. There is still considerable confusion for me on the methodology, which is now increased with the addition of the CFIR as recommended by my fellow reviewer. I think it's potentially a great addition, but this framework can't just be mentioned a couple of times: it really has to be explained, explored and exploited if you are going to mention it. Comments along these lines:

* It's unclear how you used the Boyko framework for the interviews and focus group, and for the analysis. You note up front that this is the case, but in the results, you say that the data were "initially reviewed by two researchers to reveal common themes." Then there are two overarching themes and then some sub-themes. You need to tell us what you asked participants - give us a sense of the interview approach - and how you got from there to the themes...how you did your analysis. It did

* Similarly with the CFIR framework...what is it, why did you use it and how. If you are adding this, you need to do much more work on it.

* I'm still unclear about the various frameworks but I think this is just semantics. You started with Boyko and then suggested modifications to it, am I right? Or did you develop one, which is sometimes the language you use? Is Figure 2 the original Boyko or the modification?

Other general comments:

* Where does the video footage come in? On page 11 you seem to indicate that these data are reported elsewhere...was this study part of a larger study? That needs to be clear.
* On page two the comment about "policy-maker's beliefs, values and, political goals and strategies" perpetuates the (mostly) myth that policy makers act on their own (individual) beliefs and values and ideas. I suggest keeping to needs and goals (and policy maker here is single…it should be collective, with the apostrophe after the s). A reference after this sentence would be ideal.

* Page 4: reasoned argument rather than debate…interested in the difference!

* Bottom of page 6: "We analyzed the findings of follow-up key informant interviews with delegates that..." - you did more than that. You actually did a case study. Or are you suggesting that the case study was a broader research study and this was a sub-study?

* Bottom of page ten…you mention asking participants about any influence on policy making or further research activities. The latter hasn't been mentioned to now….and the focus has seemed to be about policy making. Why did you ask about research activities and how is that relevant?

* Still some grammatical changes needed…it's instead of its, commas where none indicated

* Definition of policy maker would be helpful

In sum, this version of the paper is much stronger than the last, with some good additional definitions and explanations of how policy is developed, and good guidance for policy dialogues. There just needs to be a tightening of the methodology so we understand better how you got what you did.

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