Reviewer’s report

Title: What are the main inefficiencies in trial conduct: a survey of UKCRC registered clinical trials units in the UK

Version: 1 Date: 24 Oct 2017

Reviewer: Shaun Treweek

Reviewer’s report:

Discussion

It would be good if the authors could do the following in the Discussion:

1. Add a few sentences on the implications of these survey results for trial management and trial managers? In other words, what should we do differently now we have these results?

2. Apart from regulatory changes that the authors already mention (and see below re. the Health Research Authority, is there anything that should make us have less confidence in survey results from 2013 now that we are in late 2017?

Specific comments

1. The survey was conducted in 2013 and while the authors have added one line to the discussion (Line 281-282) with reference to the new Health Research Authority process, this should be explicitly named and perhaps comment if they feel it will make an impact on the R&D timelines (53%).

2. The response rate (55%) from CTU was lower than anticipated but did not give potential reasons why. Could you?

3. Line 77- addition of 'research' to '.. or answer the RESEARCH question.'

4. Line 214 - typo - should state One comment not On comment.

5. Line 265 -.....85% of research is wasted. This is a familiar concept in the UK but it would be good so give a few words that expand on the sort of things that comprise that waste for those a bit less familiar with it.

6. Line 321 - sentence is a bit cumbersome. Could it be reworded, or perhaps put into a bullet list.

7. The authors could specifically differentiate in the Discussion between internal/external factors affecting trial efficiency as they may have different resolutions and timelines.
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