Reviewer's report

Title: Missed opportunities for impact in patient and carer involvement: a mixed methods case study of research priority setting

Version: 1 Date: 10 March 2015

Reviewer: Rhianna Broadway

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions

The Plain English Summary has a reading age of 14.5 (according to the Gunning Fog index) and the whole article a reading age of 15.8. This is higher than recommended for lay readers and the difference between the lay and academic parts of the article is not noticeable in terms of ease of reading and clarity. I suggest the authors revisit the Plain English section at the least and revise to suit a reading age of 12 or below.

There is a lot of use of acronyms - such as NATU - this is defined once but for readers unfamiliar with these terms this is still confusing and makes the article hard to follow, especially as it is used so frequently in certain parts of the article. As this is a public, patient, involvement journal and not aimed at high end academics I feel this need to be looked at and the text revised if possible.

Discretionary Revisions

Sections of the article are quite wordy with what seems like no clear point - the methodology in the abstract being one example. My understanding of displaying a methodology is that it shows how research can be replicated - this is not clear in this article. I would struggle to replicate what the researchers have done. I think this section needs revising and in general I think the authors need generally go through the article to make sure the content of each section reflects the purpose of the section.

In the main methodology it seems to me a bit haphazard to just refer to the original methods of data collection (reference 18) in passing and to refer readers to a separate paper - as this methodology is key to the paper I think it needs more description here. As I said the methodology should enable readers to replicate the research - this does not help with this.

On the whole I struggled to understand the purpose of the research from what you have shown. With the figures given it seems obvious that there would be a disparity with these in your results just due to their nature. For example, to have a sample size of patients and carers of 509 compared to 96 HCPs, would surely always have led to a skew in results regarding the former group (in terms of the number of NACUs for one) just due to this difference. For me I feel it may have been more valuable to have looked at the outputs when an equal number of each
of the participant groups were compared. I am not a statistical expert at all but from a lay perspective it feels as though this uneven balance impacts on the validity of the research and of the conclusions outlined in this paper.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests