Reviewer's report

Title: 'Is it worth doing?' Measuring the impact of patient and public involvement on research.

Version: 1 Date: 1 June 2015

Reviewer: Rosamund Snow

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Major Compulsory Revisions
a) A brief reference to the concept that proving PPI impact is seen by some as irrelevant (user involvement as a democratic right rather than as something that improves research)

b) Some discussion is needed of what happens when the lines become blurred between “researcher” and “service user” – if a service-user works in partnership with a researcher, and it is only the service-user’s contribution that it is being scrutinised for value and impact, that becomes uncomfortable and even humiliating. This article makes the assumption that service users will always be in a subordinate position (which is increasingly not the case). The authors mention the importance of looking at when and how involvement takes place, but don’t go far enough in imagining how impact could ever be measured in gold-standard PPI (where the researcher and service users are genuinely equal and reach decisions through discussion rather than taking particular sides).

Minor Essential Revisions
None

Discretionary Revisions
In an ideal world I’d like to see some acknowledgement of the fact that there has been considerable work outside healthcare on how to get the most impact from user involvement (not just in social services but also in design, market research etc) as well as how to maximise the impact of communication, response rates, recruitment, take-up of a particular intervention etc – some of which is extremely generalisable. However I appreciate that to go into this in depth would be a whole new article, so this is just a suggestion for a discretionary revision. (And a suggestion to the editors perhaps to commission such an article so that healthcare can learn from disciplines outside its ‘silo’).

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