Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1 Date: 14 June 2015

Reviewer: Adewale Adebajo

Reviewer’s report:

This is an important and very well written article. It contains a well reasoned argument and a helpful way forward in terms of evaluating PPI impact in the future.

A few considerations (discretionary revisions) for the author:

Firstly, there are potentially different ways of measuring impact, each with their strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, it could be argued that another approach would be to advocate that purpose, methodology and limitations should be adequately explained whenever impact of PPI is being measured rather than trying to come up with a perfect solution to measuring PPI impact.

Secondly, the argument against quantitative research is in danger of being overstated in this article as quantitative research is itself moving in the direction suggested by the author. It is becoming increasingly recognised that RCT evidence only applies to the population studied. For example in RCTs of new drug interventions, the elderly and those with comorbidities are often excluded and hence the growing importance of the post marketing surveillance of new drugs especially in these (unstudied) populations. Use of the PICO principles is increasing in quantitative research and quantitative research based Guidelines and Recommendations. There is also a "grudging" recognition that there can be unconscious subjectivity in RCTs. For example, several systematic reviews have demonstrated a higher number of positive studies for a drug where the study is funded by the makers of that drug than when the study is carried out independent of the company that manufactures the drug.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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.