Reviewer’s report

Title: Finding and engaging patients and the public to work collaboratively on an acute infection microbiology research public panel

Version: 0 Date: 19 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Jo NANSON

Reviewer's report:

This is an important but understudied topic, namely how to recruit and maintain public and patient participation in ongoing medical research. In the case of this project, participation was particularly difficult because of the acute nature of the drug-resistant infections being studied that precluded using existing patient groups that are common in chronic illnesses. The authors describe a painstaking and often frustrating process to recruit patients and family members who had on-going interest in this work. The role of direct contact with possible participants is highlighted. One weakness of the paper is the omission of any discussion of the reported ethnic make-up of their panel, whom they describe as "100% White British." As a participant in a similar panel in another multi-ethnic nation, I understand the difficulties in recruiting participants from a variety of ethnic groups and socioeconomic circumstances. However the paper would be strengthened by a discussion of how this limitation may affect their deliberations. For example, some ethnic groups may perceive infections differently than mainstream citizens do, which in turn may require alternative approaches to patient consent and participation.

The paper is well written, easy to read and contains useful suggestions for engaging the public in biomedical research.

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable
Declaration of competing interests

Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I have no conflicts of interest

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal