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: 15 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Lorraine McSweeney

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for submitting your article for consideration of publication.

The article relates to the process of identifying members for and the setting up of a patient and public panel for a microbiology research project. As you have identified, PPI work is an important aspect of research and is now a requirement of many major funding bodies. The article highlights some of the challenges which may be encountered when engaging the public in research. Sharing strategies which address these challenges is likely to be useful for other researchers. Therefore, I feel there is some merit in the topic of the article, however, I feel in order for a successful publication, several amendments are required.

Overall - the style in which the article is written is quite informal and at times verbose. If the text could be written in a more formal, succinct manner, (in the third person) it would read better for academic publication.

Abstract: line 114 - results. This section reads as if this was the order you contacted the different groups/panels as opposed to the recruitment rate.

Methods: It would be helpful for the reader if the methods section was broken down with further headings such as 'recruitment' etc. The way it reads at present it is quite difficult to follow the order of the process.

Line 235 - the wording of the advertisement should be described/labelled as a 'figure' or a 'box' and referred to as such in the text.

Results: Again, it is helpful for the reader if the text is divided by headings and follows the flow of the methods section. The order of the results would benefit from restructuring. E.g. Have the description of the members and the final panel before the quotes. It would be useful to know exactly how the final panel was chosen, what was the criteria? How was this fulfilled?
Discuss the quotes first before presenting them as you have done so in line 405, then have a few to illustrate points/themes (some quotes too long as they stand) divide them into themes. The table needs to be labelled and referred to in the text.

Discussion: The discussion is quite speculative in places and needs to be backed up with references. Also, be aware of bringing in new information into the discussion that has not previously been mentioned. For example on line 485 the plan to use local press and GP surgeries is mentioned but this was not discussed in the original methods plan.

I hope my comments and suggestions for change are useful for you.

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:

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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 organization 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 declare that I have no competing interests

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