Author’s response to reviews

Title: ‘What can I do that will most help researchers?’ A different approach to training the public at the start of their involvement in research.

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Version: 2 Date: 05 Feb 2019

Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editorial Team,

We have responded to the comments in your letter (in bold text) below. We have also included this letter in the supplementary material.

Thank you for the resubmission of your paper. The re-write is easier to read for which we thank you. But the reviewers of the first draft of this proposed paper made some substantive comments that we as editors feel need to be addressed, particularly as we share some of their concerns. But in this next version we are unclear whether they have been addressed because you have not provided a detailed response in the way we require.

Please accept our sincere apologies for not including a tracked change version of the manuscript. That was our mistake. We assumed because we had described the changes we made in the detailed response to the reviewers’ comments that this would be sufficient.

We are now submitting a revised version which has all the tracked changes from the first set of revisions and another set of changes we have made just now. This second set of revisions includes details of the training programme as requested.

Our process demands a full response to reviewer comments and a version of the paper with track changes to demonstrate the changes made. For transparency we need this, particularly when there are substantive, consistent critiques made. A full and detailed response is vital for our reviewers, to ensure they feel their comments are considered and responded to. Ideally each specific comment should be put into a table with a detailed response in the column next to it. We ask the authors to please provide this so we can understand how they have refuted or agreed with critiques and what they have actually done in the paper.
As stated in our email on 28 January 2019 we did supply a table with detailed responses to the reviewers’ comments. We checked and it was still on the system from when we originally submitted our response on 8 December. We wondered if the editors have somehow not received this document, as otherwise we can’t understand this comment.

It is not acceptable to ask others to contact them with queries.

As stated in our email on 28 January, we do not believe we said this and would never think to propose this so we remain unclear as to what this statement refers to.

We would like you to provide this detailed response otherwise we will have to consider declining the paper. In addition we would like the authors to report the content of the training, otherwise the main body of this work is absent and that represents a form of poor reporting.

We have included details of the Programme in the text and an outline of the session as supplementary material.

We suggest that if you don't want to provide details of the training because of commercial concerns then you should withdraw the paper, and also that if you are reluctant to address the reviewers concerns over content this time because you are working on another paper, then again, you should withdraw this one and re-present a new version as a fresh start alongside the other paper, and we could review as a pair?

We are not preparing another paper. We have developed and piloted mirror training for researchers, both in the UK and in Denmark, but do not have plans to submit this as another paper.

We find that reviewers sometimes ask far-reaching questions that we believe would need to be addressed by a completely different project and/ or another paper. So when we have commented in this way, we are suggesting that the reviewer is asking another question that is beyond the scope of our piece of work. It is not that we have any other work or another paper ready to address these wider questions. Our project is about a different approach to training that we hope meets a different set of needs. So for example, to try to assess whether any of the training that the public receives makes a difference to their input to research is a much larger project that needs to span years, and we do not have the resources, nor plans to do this.

We hope this response provides a satisfactory answer to your comments. We would be grateful if you could shed some light on why we have been criticised for things which we haven’t done.

Many thanks.