Reviewer’s report

Title: Learning as an outcome of involvement in research: What are the implications for practice, reporting and evaluation?

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Reviewer: Richard Parnell

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Review

This is an interesting and easy to follow article on an important contemporary area. It has some strengths, but a number of some weaknesses.

Strengths

It is well written and follows a logical sequence. The latter half of the article has some interesting and relevant comments to make about impact. This is a difficult and ongoing debate and the use of the concept of co-production (which isn't mentioned in the article) could provide a framework in which the impact of PPI could be explored.

Weaknesses

The article implies that the rise of public and patient involvement (PPI) in the delivery of health services and medical research is a by-product in the introduction of evidence based medicine (EBM). However, this is to ignore the key role played in by various groups in society who want a greater say in the provision of NHS services. For example disabled people have been active for many years in this area using the campaign slogan 'nothing for us without us'. This article does not recognise the struggle that is still ongoing, to move health service provision towards the 'social model' and away from the 'medical model' of health and social care provision.

The article rightly discusses the issue of epistemology, but then accepts that scientific evidence is 'objective and rational' and experiential knowledge is 'subjective and emotional'. This reasoning takes no account of the powerful discourses that the scientific method and medical knowledge have promoted since the foundation of the empirical methodology.

Overall this article skates over key issues of power and the history in the delivery of health services. Also the struggle that people at the sharp end of health and social care provision have had and are still having to have representation in services they received and the decisions made about their health and well-being.

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An article of limited interest

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