Reviewer’s report

Title: Reflections on qualitative data analysis training for PPI partners and its implementation into practice

Version: 1 Date: 25 Mar 2019

Reviewer: Julia Keenan

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for this reflective piece of work around involving older people as volunteers in the analysis of qualitative data. The piece will be of some interest to those attempting to undertake similar activities, but is small in scale and scope and thus its findings are of interest, but limited utility within the field. As you suggest, in your closing paragraph, perhaps there is no definitive guidance on 'optimal amounts/types' of qualitative research training to lay members (of any age) because it needs to be tailored specifically to their situated needs, interests and ultimately to its subsequent anticipated application? But also, do professional researchers not similarly require training in how to work effectively with lay members in analysing qualitative data?

The authors provide a brief description of the training process and its subsequent implementation on a real-life study, and offer some limited critical reflection upon this from differing perspectives. Some of the training and evaluation processes would benefit from being detailed more fully, e.g. It would be useful to say how many course evaluation forms were returned and to append a blank form to the submission to see what was asked and how - there seem to be a number of free-text option, but it would be helpful to understand exactly how the course was evaluated.

The PPI terminology within the paper needs to be tightened and unified. At times the piece refers to PPI partners and at others PPI representatives (there are subtle differences indicative of the power balance within the model of PPI that the research team is employing), so I suggest you use either partners - which indicates greater sharing of power, or representatives - which indicates less. We also have references to 'PPIs' (which makes no sense if you expand the abbreviation) and in other places 'PPI involvement', when it should just be PPI.

More generally, and in relation to the above point, there is quite a bit of tidying up required in relation to English expression, which is currently often imprecise and unclear e.g. line 157, should this be 'analytical' and 'reflective' notes, rather than 'reflexive' notes - reflexive indicates they are considering their own bias/positionality? Which is more often something the more highly trained interviewer doing/influencing the data collection and subsequent analysis might do, rather than PPI members? This is perhaps a more technical example, but in other places sentences need redrafting to make proper sense e.g. lines 262-264.
There have been a few recent national evaluations of PPI e.g. (Wilson et al 2015) that include findings on training and references to debates around this, which if included, might strengthen your work.

More importantly, how do your findings compare to those of the other cited studies that reflect upon or evaluate training for older PPI members (4, 7-11)? I think a discussion section providing this information would strengthen the work.

I think this process was a worthwhile exercise and is useful to report, but that the paper would benefit from some strengthening prior to publication.

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