Reviewer’s report

Title: Patient involvement in cardiovascular research: a qualitative impact evaluation

Version: 1 Date: 18 Apr 2019

Reviewer: Delia Muir

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper. It's lovely to see an involvement impact evaluation that has been driven by and co-designed with members of the public, and includes the perspectives of both public contributors and researchers. Also good to see a project which acknowledges the importance of process and context within public involvement. I was particularly interested to read about diversity issues in this context. For example, how the approach to involvement (e.g. dialogue vs written feedback) can affect people's ability to contribute.

Overall, I found the paper clear and fairly easy to follow. However, I would like to highlight some minor language issues:

* Change 'subsidy' to 'funding' throughout.
* Change 'The committee participates in implementing these recommendations' to 'committee members have contributed to implementing these recommendations' (abstract).
* I'm not clear what the phrase 'to prevent a disguise of conflict of interest' means (line 154)
* Line 171 - add the word 'for' after the word 'asking'.
* Consider changing the term 'test-subjects' to 'research participants' throughout.
* Consider changing 'Easier use of language' to 'use of simpler language' or 'use of clearer language' throughout.

Some additional comments / queries:

The results section states: 'According to several interviewees, the input of patients should not be in the method and analysis of the research, since they consider that their own expertise' (line 246) However, I don't think that the quote which follows supports that interpretation. The researcher quote which follows that statement, seems to suggest that patient's views should be considered alongside scientific expertise; not that patients should be excluded from commenting on methods. I think that is a subtle but important difference.

For me, a limitation of this study is that you conceptualise impact only in terms of impact on research, rather than impact on the people involved (researchers and public contributors). I think that limitation should be acknowledged.

I was interested to read about participants' different perspectives on training. Training is a contentious and complex issue within public involvement. I would like to see a little more critical reflection on training in the discussion (particularly pros and cons / approaches to training for committee members). Reference to broader literature may be helpful e.g.
I think you have started to explore issues related to this in your section on 'professionalization' but it could be linked more explicitly to training. This is important given that one of your recommendations is 'Improving training/education for researchers and the committee'.

**Level of interest**

Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English**

Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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