Reviewer’s report

Title: Patient and Public Involvement in doctoral research: Reflections and experiences of the PPI contributors and researcher

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Reviewer: Sarah Brand

Reviewer's report:

This is a quite well written paper, but the main issue is that I don't see anything innovative here which has a particular interest to anyone with more than passing interest in PPI. The issues which you identify are quite well known to anyone who has engaged in PPI in research. Although you are quite right that there is an issue that PPI is often not considered in all elements of the research process, this is quite well known to many researchers and you do not offer any particularly interesting insights into why this is, or innovative solutions as to how to encourage others to take a more robust approach to PPI within research, other than you found it useful. The narrative approach is perfectly reasonable, but the insights provided do not to me, show anything that I would not have expected.

When considering doctoral research, you could have considered some of the power differentials between PPI members and an early career researcher, and how this is different from those when experienced researchers are involved ie. the power differentials may be less evident and therefore render PPI activity more of an equal relationship than is possible in other research contexts, and what the benefits of this might be. But you don't appear to have considered any of these more interesting insights which might have been less obvious.

In the end the take home message seems to be, do PPI throughout the research process and it can be very valuable (which is laudable of course and I thoroughly agree) but as someone who is very committed to PPI, this paper doesn't give me any particularly interesting insights or ideas of how or why this should be done. Well done for being so committed to making sure PPI was a part of your doctoral research, but I think you have probably just done what most other doctoral researchers are (or at least should) be doing. I'm not sure this is innovative or interesting enough for publication, but I am certain that the results of your doctoral study itself will be.

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