Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Educational content and challenges encountered when training service user representatives as peer researchers in a mixed study on patient experience of hospital safety

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 09 Jan 2020

**Reviewer:** Philippa Yeeles

**Reviewer's report:**

Many thanks to the authors for their work on the revised manuscript and their response to reviewers’ comments.

I find this an interesting topic. I am enthused by learning, even just a little, about the background and structure of service user involvement in France, its juxtaposition to the 'Montreal model', Paris University Hospitals etc. It is also instructive to learn about the development of a peer researcher training programme and gain insight into the content of the programme and the experiences of those involved.

However, I struggle with the following:

Language
I appreciate that work has been done to revise and improve the use of English. It has helped me to understand more of the content of the paper. But I feel that a further edit of the entire article is required. Here are just a few examples of why:

1. The title of the paper ….‘when training service users to participate in a mixed study on’ …. ’Participation' in a study usually refers to the people who are participants/research subjects. To avoid any misunderstanding - in an area where definitions are disputed/fluid - it would, for example, provide greater clarity if the title ….‘when training service users as peer researchers in a mixed study on’ …. 
2. Page 2 Lines 44&45. 'To perform their duties, SURs are trained by the regional delegations of the collectives under which their licenced societies are organised.' For someone who does not know the French healthcare system there is a lot of assumed knowledge in this sentence. What is the equivalent of a 'licenced society' (or even just a society) in other healthcare systems? Is it like a private or a public company, a third/voluntary sector organisation, a social enterprise - or something else? In which case, it would be helpful to have this defined as being in some way similar to X,Y or Z. What are 'the collectives' and what are the 'regional delegations'? To a reader like me, who is UK-centric, without any grasp of the French healthcare system beyond what is provided in the article - I am confused rather than enlightened by the information provided. (In addition, it would be helpful to have some references included in this part of the context section (lines 32-60) should the reader want to find out more.)
3. A number of times phrases that are difficult to understand are used and repeated. This example was cited by a fellow reviewer in their original comments about the plain English summary but has
not been addressed….‘even in the case of experimented users - such as service user representatives - who were already federated.' This appears in page 1 lines 58/59, page 2 line 27/28, page 11 lines 32/33. I can't work out what this means.

4. Page 5 lines 43-46. The verb tense changes from past to future and I don't know why. … 'Interviews were analysed. … a questionnaire will be created … questionnaires will allow’ …. I do not underestimate the work involved in writing in a language that is not your mother tongue. I could not do this, and I applaud the authors for doing so. However, I think the paper remains significantly hampered by the quality of the writing.

Profiles of peer researchers
One of the aims of the article is to describe the profiles of the peer researchers. The article provides some information about them (page 5 lines 9-17) but as this is a stated aim of the article, I would expect more detail and analysis of this issue. Is there any demographic data beyond their age? E.g. ethnic background, sex, educational attainment, employment status, disability etc. Can the paper reflect on how 'representative' of the wider population in PUH the peer researchers are - or aren't? I would also expect to see this issue reflected in the discussion and possibly in the conclusion.

Modalities of recruitment
Another stated aim of the article is to describe recruitment methods. Again, the article provides some information (pages 4 and 5) but I don't come away with a clear understanding of the recruitment process. Of all 139 SURs, how many of them met the inclusion criteria (page 5 lines 10-14)? Of the X number of people who met the criteria how many applied to become a peer researcher? What was the recruitment method chosen and why? What was the selection process? There is some reflection on the recruitment process in the discussion section (page 11) but I find some of the comments difficult to understand/interpret (use of language).

Intended aims, outcomes and outputs from the training programme
The reporting of this training programme appears to me to be a research study within a research study. My understanding is that the main aim of the study on patient experience of hospital safety is described on p3 lines 21-24 and p4 lines 22-26. My understanding of the main aim of the research into the training programme is less clear. In the plain English summary it states: 'The study's preconception was that the unique insights of peer researchers as insiders would help us to understand patient experience and identify the best professional practices to improve a patient's experience of hospital safety.' In the study abstract there is no mention of the aim(s) of the training programme rather it gives the aims of the paper. Whilst we are given some rich descriptive detail about the programme, the intended outcomes or outputs of the training programme are not clearly stated or reflected on in the article. So, for example, if one of the aims of the programme was for 'unique insights' to be gained. How was this to be measured and were such insights gained? I find this aspect poorly developed and reported in the paper.

Discussion (pages 10 & 11)
The discussion contains some interesting and useful reflections. However, I find a couple of the sections contain sensitive information that makes individual peer researchers identifiable (p10 lines 31-37 and p11 lines 15-17) - to themselves and others involved in the study. Is this necessary? Have the peer researchers been involved in writing or commenting on drafts of this paper? Is it possible to re-write these sections? For example, rather than talking about one of the peer researchers showing signs of emotional fragility, the paper could focus on the learning from this. For example by stating that the research team had not adequately planned for the situation where, due to illness, a peer researcher felt unable to continue in their role.

**Level of interest**
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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