Author’s response to reviews

Title: Development and formative evaluation of patient research partner involvement in a multidisciplinary European translational research project

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The authors are grateful to both reviewers and the editors for taking the time and trouble to review our manuscript, and hope that the changes we have made to the revised version have addressed any issues they have raised satisfactorily. Please see below for a point-by-point response to reviewers’ comments:

Reviewer 1: “The manuscript is well written and described issues with the potential to inform interventions with substantial health impact. Listed below are two minor comments I suggest to be address before publication”
Response: The authors thank the reviewer for these very positive comments, and for recognising the importance of this work.
Reviewer 1: “I find the use of present tense throughout the manuscript problematic. Change present tense to past tense.”
Response: Wherever possible we have changed the present tense to past tense throughout the
manuscript. Where the text pertains to a matter that is present, or ongoing, we have not changed the present tense to maintain a coherent narrative. However, we are happy to make further tense revisions if requested.

Reviewer 1: “Methods: It would have been good to describe how the data was analysed by clearly stating the methods and tools used.”
Response: Thank you for highlighting this omission. We have added the following statement to the Methods section (page 11): “The frequency with which each response category was chosen was summed for Likert-type scales, and descriptive thematic analysis of free text responses was undertaken by RB and MF.”

Reviewer 2: “This article is well written. The work done to evaluate the involvement through a survey has been well done. I am certain the authors have done involvement to the best of their abilities.”
Response: The authors thank the reviewer for these positive comments, and for highlighting the quality of the work undertaken.

Reviewer 2: “A few years ago an article like this would have been extremely useful. However the findings are very common - researchers and patients need training and support to be involved, patients want feedback about their involvement and involvement in basic research is different to involvement in qualitative research. There weren't new insights in this paper - which is not a reason not to accept it. It is adding another confirmation of a large body of evidence that already reports on these findings.”
Response: The authors agree with the reviewer that our findings related to training and feedback on patient involvement in research are common. However we suggest that examples of involvement in translational research are limited, and no studies that we are aware of have previously highlighted the potential for multidisciplinary consortia incorporating both basic and psychosocial science in the same project to facilitate the development of patient and public involvement in basic science. We would be happy to add examples of such studies if we have overlooked them. We thank the reviewer for observing that their opinion is not a reason for not accepting our manuscript.

Reviewer 2: “Some findings are further advanced for example, recent work has been done to clarify exactly what feedback patents need following involvement. So some aspects of this paper seem a bit dated in not referring to such work.”
Response: Thank you for highlighting this omission. We have added the following sentence “These findings align with recent work to clarify the kinds of feedback needed by public contributors to research” to the discussion (page 22) and have referred to the recent paper by Mathie et al (Health Expectations 2018;21:899–908): “Reciprocal relationships and the importance of feedback in patient and public involvement: A mixed methods study”.
