Reviewer’s report

Title: Exploring the perspectives of community members as research partners in rural and remote areas

Version: 0 Date: 24 Oct 2019

Reviewer: Katie Banister

Reviewer's report:

I found this an interesting and well written article which had some novel elements exploring barriers and motivators for rural communities being involved in the research process. I have a few comments which I would suggest need addressing.

1. The title does not make it clear where in the world the Northern and Rural communities are. It also isn't clear why Northern is the key aspect of this research. Is it not more a reflection of the distance from the centres of population and government? If so I would suggest changing the wording of the title to "remote and rural communities". If the authors feel the research only applies to those in northern and rural Canada then I would suggest leaving the term northern and adding Canada to the title instead.

2. To my knowledge the term 'knowledge user' is not a commonly used term in the UK setting so could do with further clearer explanation on first appearance in the manuscript. Are you including members of the public in this group? If so I would prefer this to be clearer - see my point 3 below.

3. I was concerned at the lack of any documentation of patient and public involvement (PPI) in the research as distinct from the actual research itself which was conducting qualitative research 'on' members of the public to find their perspectives on PPI. Given the research is highlighting the important considerations for PPI in research, I would have expected the researchers to have considered public views when planning, conducting, analysing and reporting the results. The GRIPP2 checklist highlights that there has been PPI in these aspects but it is not clear in the methods. I would suggest the authors explain what public involvement they had in the methods more clearly in the main manuscript and not confuse this with the data obtained in the qualitative research.

4. The development of the framework is not explained in the methods. How was this derived? Were public partners involved in the development of the framework or the plain language summary.

5. In table 1 I would like to see all the demographics which were used in purposive sampling as described in line 193-196- eg. Ethnic group/indigenous peoples etc. The previous experience of participants is not clearly documented in the results so this could also be added to the table or in text. Age needs a unit (years) in table 1.

6. I felt the results section was not very long or detailed and a there was a lot of emphasis in the discussion to elements not highlighted explicitly in the results for example: What is the rationale for using the terms identified in line 427. Was this one of the findings of the research? If so, please include in the methods and results.

7. What do the authors believe are the limitations of their research?
8. Were community partners involved in developing the implications and future directions?

9. As highlighted in point 3 the GRIPP2 checklist may need updating

10. On page 14 line 376 is rather a strong statement as the authors did not consider study design, data collection, analysis and interpretation in this study - or if it was considered it was not clearly documented

11. I do not have great expertise in qualitative research however I would expect to see more details in the methods section regarding the methods used for the telephone interview, any topic guide, how this was developed, any methodology used to develop this and implement it.

12. There is clearly cross over between this manuscript and another manuscript highlighted concerning physical activity. It would be helpful to make it clearer what the relevance of physical activity (as stated for example in line 400) was in selecting and including participants in this reported research. Or if this is a limitation to the research that the group may not have experience of research.

**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:

Acceptable

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