

Reviewer's report

Title: Research Designs for Studies Promoting Healthcare Organization Change: Should Action Research Have a Place at the Table?

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Reviewer: Heather Waterman

Reviewer's report:

I am pleased to review this article again on how action research might be integrated into RCT. While I am generally sympathetic to the concept, the article still requires further development as follows;

1. The statement that PAR has consistency with CAS principles is unclear and needs rewriting.
2. PAR as indicated in Table 1 has also been influential in the health literature.
3. There seems to be an implicit assumption the participatory action research and participatory research are the same. In my view not all participatory research is action research. This contested area needs acknowledging.
4. Table 1 - the references need updating. [It appears that the authors have not updated their literature since they last submitted the article].
5. I would remove the section on CQI ? it does not really add anything to the discussion and is a distraction.
6. Table 2 is very useful. The elements of an integrated PAR/RCT could be used as headings in the text. The authors could then discuss each in turn. For example, 'Key elements of intervention are locally implemented based on collaborative discussion' is discussed well in the text. But other remaining six elements are not discussed nor clarified. Eg. How do you incorporate local conditions into overarching approach? Who does this? How is bias used to form the basis of generalisable understanding? What does this mean? What kind of endpoints do you mean? How does reflection occur? Who does it? Is there a control arm? What does comparisons based on ?content analysis mean? Who are the different parties and how do you get joint control?
7. An example of an implementation research study needs to be

incorporated into the text so the reader can understand the difference and similarity between a conventional RCT and an integrated PAR/RCT.

8. An integrated approach will also give rise to a better theoretical understanding of the intervention.

I look forward to reading the revised article.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'