

## Reviewer's report

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

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 29 November 2007

**Reviewer:** Jeffrey Braithwaite

### Reviewer's report:

General

Thank you for the opportunity to review this nicely crafted paper.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. Exploring action research as a method for facilitating organisational change is an important area of research. Recognising health care organisations as complex adaptive systems is a valuable vantage point for investigating organisational change. However this literature review, while valuable, could be more tightly defined. There is an abundance of research questions, and some questions seem too broad. For example, the paper seems to ask at various points:

Is action research more consistent with how complex adaptive systems operate?

Is action research effective in bringing about organisational change?

How might action research be studied and applied in health care settings?

Why there is a need to consider using different research methods in health care?

How action research can be defined?

What similarities are there between action research and quality improvement research?

How could action research supplement traditional research designs?

Could action research methods facilitate 'getting findings into practice'? (Does this mean implementation, or knowledge transfer?)

What comparisons there are regarding research methods for organisational change in health care and non-healthcare organisations.

If the paper could be tightened it will carry its message more clearly on my reading of it. It will also contribute to the debate more effectively.

2. The very nice case study at the beginning is not dealt with to optimal advantage later. Should not the later sections of the paper return to the questions raised?

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

3. There is a difference between action research and participatory action research, yet the terms are used interchangeably. Could this be clarified?

4. Many of the statements made on page 4 could benefit from referencing.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Needs some minor punctuation corrections before being published.

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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