

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Collaborative research methods and best practice with children and young people: protocol for a mixed-method review of the health and social sciences literature
AUTHORS	Nowland, Rebecca; Robertson, Laura; Farrelly, Nicola; Roy, Alastair; Sharpe, Darren; Harris, Cath; Morocza, Nora; Larkins, Cath

VERSION 1 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Bellefeuille, Gerard
REVIEW RETURNED	19-Mar-2022

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>This manuscript does an excellent job describing the research rationale, methodology, and findings regarding the rights of children and young people to participate in research on matters that affect them. The level of evidence by that paper is strong, and probably merits a change in ethical protocol. Overall, it is very well written and has an important political and policy message and should be of great interest to the readers.</p>
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REVIEWER	Harris, Jane Liverpool John Moores University, Public Health Institute
REVIEW RETURNED	06-Jul-2022

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>This paper presents a study protocol for a mixed methods systematic review of best practice when using collaborative methods with children and young people. The review covers an important area of research methodology which is relevant to health-related disciplines, makes use of children and young people's participation to shape the protocol and review and aims to synthesise a wider range of literature from across the social sciences. In particular, it was great to see how the review will be produced in continuous collaboration with CYAP.</p> <p>The introduction presents a really interesting overview of the issues related to children and young people's power to participate in research and how participatory methods and the knowledge produced are valued by CYAP and by researchers and funders. The only oversight from this section I think the authors may need to consider, given broad social science focus of the review, is some sense of how these issues perhaps vary across disciplines as well as some about which disciplines are participating in research with CYAP and for what purpose.</p> <p>In paragraph 2, the authors explain how their review expands the evidence from previous reviews in the health field to the wider social sciences. I think it would be really useful here to justify the benefits</p>
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	<p>of this broader approach and how bringing different disciplinary perspectives together can assist in future participatory work with CYAP.</p> <p>P5 line 18 “Where children and young people are included in research, they may be provided with information, or experience being ‘researched on’, however their influence over the priorities to investigate, and changes in guidance and practice is poorly evidenced.” I found this sentence a little unclear – what priorities and changes to guidance and practice are being referred to here?</p> <p>Aim: in the aim and objectives the terms collaborative research and peer researcher are used quite interchangeably. It would be good to define these terms if they are different. Was peer researchers the preferred term used by CYAP?</p> <p>I noted in the study registration section that the review will triangulate findings from a traditional systematic review (to identify core models and methods of peer research) and a realist synthesis of what works for peer research, for whom, in what contexts and why. I don’t feel that the realist aspects of the review are perhaps completely covered in the remains of the methodology section. In particular</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how will the initially searched papers be separated for these two review aspects. • How will the data for the realist synthesis (e.g verbatim quotes from papers, elements of context, mechanism, and outcome) be recorded in the data extraction? • how will the findings of the realist aspect of the review be analysed and presented? Will initial programme theories be developed, tested and refined? How will this process be undertaken • How will the systematic review and realist reviews be synthesised? • Will any guidance (e.g. RAMESES) be followed for the realist synthesis • How will this realist approach and the type of data required be accounted for in the quality appraisal exercise, given realist reviews do not take a conventional approach to assessing evidence quality? <p>The research findings will be quality appraised using AMSTAR 2. It would be good to have a little more reflection on this decision to use a tool designed for healthcare intervention studies given 1) the wider than health focus of the review 2) the realist aspect of the study 3) the excellent points made in the discussion about how the methods, presentation of data and knowledge produced in collaborative research with CYAP do not always meet conventional standards of research quality.</p> <p>Reference to hackathon in the search strategy (page 8 line 35-49), I found the details of this here a little difficult to follow within this section – would be better to refer reader to the PPI section.</p> <p>Consideration of any limitations of the review methods would be useful.</p>
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Gerard Bellefeuille

Comments to the Author:

This manuscript does an excellent job describing the research rationale, methodology, and findings regarding the rights of children and young people to participate in research on matters that affect them. The level of evidence by that paper is strong, and probably merits a change in ethical protocol. Overall, it is very well written and has an important political and policy message and should be of great interest to the readers.

Thank you for your positive feedback about the review. In relation to the comment about ethics we have added the following to the Ethics and Dissemination statement to make consent and ethical issues around involvement of young people in the development of the review clearer:

Collaborative work with the experienced young researchers was conducted as part of an ongoing university research collaboration network. Young people receive information about the network and each activity. They, and their parents if under 16, provide signed consent to join the network and verbal consent to participate in any given activity.

Reviewer: 2

Dr. Jane Harris, Liverpool John Moores University Comments to the Author:

This paper presents a study protocol for a mixed methods systematic review of best practice when using collaborative methods with children and young people. The review covers an important area of research methodology which is relevant to health-related disciplines, makes use of children and young people's participation to shape the protocol and review and aims to synthesise a wider range of literature from across the social sciences. In particular, it was great to see how the review will be produced in continuous collaboration with CYAP.

Thank you

The introduction presents a really interesting overview of the issues related to children and young people's power to participate in research and how participatory methods and the knowledge produced are valued by CYAP and by researchers and funders. The only oversight from this section I think the authors may need to consider, given broad social science focus of the review, is some sense of how these issues perhaps vary across disciplines as well as some about which disciplines are participating in research with CYAP and for what purpose.

In addressing this comment we were mindful of the word count and have updated the introduction slightly to highlight the emphasis on participation across both health and social sciences.

In paragraph 2, the authors explain how their review expands the evidence from previous reviews in the health field to the wider social sciences. I think it would be really useful here to justify the benefits of this broader approach and how bringing different disciplinary perspectives together can assist in future participatory work with CYAP.

We have now added the following sentence:

The interdisciplinary approach in this review will enable a refined examination of best practice in collaborative research with children and young people by drawing on social science and health understandings of interpersonal relationships and contexts, as well as diverse methodologies.

P5 line 18 "Where children and young people are included in research, they may be provided with information, or experience being 'researched on', however their influence over the priorities to investigate, and changes in guidance and practice is poorly evidenced." I found this sentence a little unclear – what priorities and changes to guidance and practice are being referred to here?

We have now edited this sentence so it reads as follows:

Where children and young people are included in research, they are provided with information but tend to experience being 'researched on'. Their influence over the research priorities to investigate, approaches to analysis and guidance on use of research findings in practice is less evidenced.

Aim: in the aim and objectives the terms collaborative research and peer researcher are used quite interchangeably. It would be good to define these terms if they are different. Was peer researchers the preferred term used by CYAP?

We had in the last version provided our rationale and definition for the review for collaborative research. We have now edited throughout and changed to collaborative research to provide consistency.

I noted in the study registration section that the review will triangulate findings from a traditional systematic review (to identify core models and methods of peer research) and a realist synthesis of what works for peer research, for whom, in what contexts and why. I don't feel that the realist aspects of the review are perhaps completely covered in the remains of the methodology section. In particular

Thank you for your helpful comments we have attempted to address these whilst retaining the text in the required word count, so have at times done this in a parsimonious way.

- how will the initially searched papers be separated for these two review aspects.

In the previous version we noted that papers would be categorised into groups for each aspect. We have attempted to make this clearer in the text. For example, the second paragraph in the study registration now states:

Using the distinction of article types from Vaughn et al.³¹ selected articles will be grouped into reviews, descriptive articles (those describing lessons learnt or a description of the programme) and process articles (process or training of a peer model) and articles that focused on the peers themselves and their experiences within a peer model/approach. The mixed methods review will involve: 1) a systematic review of the review articles and a 2) realist synthesis of the process, descriptive papers and those written by young co-researchers.

- How will the data for the realist synthesis (e.g verbatim quotes from papers, elements of context, mechanism, and outcome) be recorded in the data extraction?

Mechanism was already mentioned in the previous version and we have now added contexts (geographical locations, service and community settings, and issues) and outcome to the details that will be extracted from texts and noted that verbatim quotes from papers will be extracted to the data extraction section.

- how will the findings of the realist aspect of the review be analysed and presented? Will initial programme theories be developed, tested and refined? How will this process be undertaken

We have now added the following text in the data synthesis section:

The realist review will aim to provide a theory outlining the contexts and mechanisms and particular young people where collaborative research enables participation and influence, placing specific emphasis on typically marginalised youth. The findings across the different reviews will be collated into an accessible report focussing on identifying best practice for collaborative research with children and young people.

- How will the systematic review and realist reviews be synthesised?

We have now added the following text in the data synthesis section:

The findings across the different reviews will be collated into an accessible report focussing on identifying best practice for collaborative research with children and young people.

- Will any guidance (e.g. RAMESES) be followed for the realist synthesis

Yes, we have now added this to the study registration section:

This protocol is guided by ... and The Realist And Meta-narrative Evidence Syntheses – Evolving Standards (RAMESES) publication standards for realist syntheses and meta-narrative reviews.³⁰

- How will this realist approach and the type of data required be accounted for in the quality appraisal exercise, given realist reviews do not take a conventional approach to assessing evidence quality?

The research findings will be quality appraised using AMSTAR 2. It would be good to have a little more reflection on this decision to use a tool designed for healthcare intervention studies given 1) the wider than health focus of the review 2) the realist aspect of the study 3) the excellent points made in the discussion about how the methods, presentation of data and knowledge produced in collaborative research with CYAP do not always meet conventional standards of research quality.

As this is an appraisal tool for use with systematic reviews and we intend to use it only for the systematic review of reviews, we have now added the following:

This tool is a necessary starting point for the review of reviews, to measure quality of protocol and reporting of systematic reviews. Adaptations of this tool will be developed alongside RAMESES, if needed, to enable incorporation of wider literature (i.e. grey literature reports, realist reviews).

We have also added the following to the section in the critical appraisal where we discuss the use of alternative tools – i.e. participation lattice, to make it clear that we are using some alternative frameworks focused more on collaborative processes than quality appraisal of the research in the review:

Using these frameworks enables a critical appraisal of the participation of young people in the studies rather than merely an assessment of research quality that is typically demonstrated by appraisal tools to incorporate that the knowledge generated by collaborative research and how it is reported does not always meet conventional standards of research quality.

Reference to hackathon in the search strategy (page 8 line 35-49), I found the details of this here a little difficult to follow within this section – would be better to refer reader to the PPI section.

Thank you for this suggestion we now refer the reader to the PPI statement in this section.

Consideration of any limitations of the review methods would be useful.

We have been asked to add some limitations to the strengths and limitations section (i.e. bullet point sentences at the beginning) to address this.

VERSION 2 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Harris, Jane Liverpool John Moores University, Public Health Institute
REVIEW RETURNED	01-Sep-2022
GENERAL COMMENTS	I am happy that the authors have addressed my comments and thank them for their detailed response. I look forward to reading the completed review.

