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Dear Sir or Madam,

I would like to raise a point regarding one of the most crucial components in the funding process of scientific research; peer review. As time has gone on, more and more organisations are developing a peer review process to try to achieve objectivity, transparent governance and ensure that they achieve the highest levels of research.

Identifying experts in the field and obtaining their comments is becoming a greater and greater challenge as more high-profile practitioners receive overwhelming requests to peer-review applications, as well as requests from scientific journals.

As it governance becomes a higher priority within research establishments it is likely that more and more resources will have to be allocated to identifying and managing peer reviews, and yet nobody seems to have looked at the issue from a distant, objective perspective.

I believe that it could be possible, as part of the Review of Health Research, to develop a structure within the UK to make the peer-review process more structured, and more efficient. Ideas such as a central user-edited on-line database of reviewers could be created, a small-scale version of wikipedia for researchers and reviewers, for example. There are a number of solutions that could be implemented for very little money if set up centrally, but could save research establishments vast time and resources.

If we do not look at this process now and how it can be facilitated and streamlined, it may end up holding up the process of funding, ethics approval, and adding extra layers of to the process of administrating research. However, the opportunity is to set up an efficient, supportive system to facilitate and develop the process of peer review and overall governance of research and research funding.

Yours sincerely,

Kim Morgan MA
RAB Grant Administrator