

Peer Review

Review of: "Risks for Academic Research and Possible Responses"

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This paper makes a valuable contribution to understanding the practical, day-to-day risks faced by academic research teams, bridging a gap between scholarly project management literature and the real-world experiences of researchers and research staff. The retrospective analysis of data from more than 500 participants is a particular strength, enabling the paper to distill a broad perspective on which risks truly resonate across various disciplines and career stages. It offers a constructive, evidence-based perspective on risk management within academic research. By emphasizing the shared nature of many risks and pointing to system-level solutions, it sets a productive tone for research managers, funders, and institutions alike to rethink how they support academic projects. A key insight is that many of the most pressing risks, such as funding instability, personnel turnover, and unreliable partners, are not uniquely “research-specific” but rather systemic and organizational. This highlights the importance of looking beyond the research team’s immediate sphere of control to recommend broader, structural remedies. The author’s suggestions (for example: engaging funders early, facilitating knowledge transfer, and improving partnership management) offer clear, practical starting points for mitigating such risks at the project level.

Strengths:

- **Clear Focus:** The paper remains tightly centered on academic research risk management, summarizing the literature succinctly while integrating the workshop findings.
- **Practical Relevance:** Concrete response strategies (such as building strong relationships with funders, mentoring for specialized roles) make the content actionable for research teams.
- **Broad Data Pool:** Leveraging input from diverse workshops and courses increases confidence that the conclusions capture varied viewpoints.

Areas for Enhancement:

1. **Discipline-Specific Nuances:** While the paper acknowledges risks unique to different fields (such as participant recruitment in health sciences), a deeper comparison of how risks vary by discipline could strengthen the paper's applicability.
2. **Role-Specific Perspectives:** Including richer data about participants' roles (such as principal investigators vs. early-career researchers) might uncover how each group perceives and prioritizes risk differently.
3. **Longitudinal Follow-Up:** Since this was a retrospective analysis, future research could track actual outcomes of risk mitigation strategies, whether suggested responses were implemented and how they affected project success.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.