Reviewer's report

Title: A framework for organizing and selecting quantitative approaches for benefit harm assessment

Version: 1 Date: 7 November 2011

Reviewer: Michele Shaffer

Reviewer's report:

General Comments:

The authors provide a review of literature of quantitative approaches for assessing benefit and harm. A multidisciplinary team developed framework to assist with the selection of an approach based on the particular setting of the investigator’s problem. The authors should be commended for the multidisciplinary effort as well as bringing together information that is published in disparate sources.

Specific Comments:

While the authors admit that current quantitative approaches for assessing benefit and harm may need further development, the utility of the article would be increased by specific recommendations for future research that would solve such issues as how to 1) handle different scales of data, 2) take into account time to the event, and 3) include measures of precision.

Minor Comments:

On page 6, in the last paragraph there is an incomplete sentence that begins, “The discussion served to define properties that characterize quantitative approaches for benefit and harm assessment and to”.

When Figure 2 is presented by itself (without title or footnote) on the page, “Evidence Generation” does not fit inside the first box.

The word, “multiple” is misspelled as “mutiple” in one location in the first supplementary file.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.