Reviewer's report

Title: Clinical cost-effectiveness analysis: a method for comparing competing interventions in the absence of randomized trials

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Reviewer: Javier Mar

Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Title (Clinical cost-effectiveness analysis: a method for comparing competing interventions in the absence of randomized trials) needs to be changed. The inclusion of the term cost as an equivalent to risk is misleading. Cost is always measured in monetary units. The approach comes from the cost-effectiveness methods but it is applied to a risk-benefit framework. In my opinion the original terminology by Lynd and O'Brien should be recovered.

2. The objective (we elaborate on a method to compare competing interventions through a cost-effectiveness approach using information available in the literature to estimate the costs and benefits of an intervention from a clinical perspective (i.e. the clinical cost-effectiveness analysis, CCEA) and we provide an example to illustrate this method) is not adequately justified. They should specify in the introduction and in the methods the added value of their complementary approach to the previous paper by Lynd and O'Brien.

3. The example has been used only to draw the pictures. They should include a results section with results of the calculations carried out. At the same time a reader would expect in the discussion comments about the conclusions obtained by applying the method to the example. It is easier to understand the method and its uses when the authors show the calculations and comment a real case.

4. The discussion is basically a concepts review and lacks of a description of the consequences of using the method in the real world. As an example, the second paragraph of the discussion could be moved to the introduction because does not rely on the results of the paper. My suggestion is to substitute some of the general comments based on concepts by specific comments about the example.

- Minor Essential Revisions

- Discretionary 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.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'