Reviewer's report

Title: Systematic review of methods used in meta-analyses where a primary outcome is an adverse or unintended event

Version: 1 Date: 10 September 2011

Reviewer: Alessandro Liberati

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revision

The paper has clearly stated objectives which are essentially to describe which methods are used in MAs where a primary outcome is an adverse or unintended event. In this sense the paper presents itself as a descriptive study and not as an essay that includes judgments and recommendation of "good practice".

This declaration, however, is not always completely adhered to and this should be revised in the final version, especially in the discussion section.

Specifically, this reviewer suggests that the discussion section gets shortened and that Authors introduce a specific (a subsection perhaps?) where they make their own explicit recommendations for the priorities areas where methodological guidelines should be developed.

In particular the section on "sparse data", while important, should be shortened.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests