Reviewer's report

Title: Reference Management Software in the Preparation of Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses: an exploration of usage and usability

Version: 1 Date: 5 September 2013

Reviewer: Elizabeth Pienaar

Reviewer's report:

1. Minor Essential revisions
   Results
   Last sentence of 1st paragraph: write seventy-eight surveys as 78.

2nd paragraph: Where percentages are given please add it in numbers e.g. 79% of respondents as 79% (62/78)

2. Discretionary Revisions
   Background
   2nd last paragraph: The last sentence of this paragraph makes a statement can lead to strong reactions from review authors. The use of, or not, of software should not be limiting authors to the number of studies included in a review.

   Methods
   Study Identification.
   Limiting the studies the authors included to English only may be a limitation.
   If the email address of the corresponding author is not available I would suggest to use Google to try to locate the author, alternatively a simple search for the author on Medline should also retrieve the address.

   Discussion
   4th paragraph: 2nd sentence:” A failure to identify duplicate records captured in database searched may result in an over-reporting of identified studies.” I don’t agree with this – when you include results from studies in a review you need to extract data from those studies and you note the bibliographic details, surely while doing this an author should be able to see that he/she is now listing the same study more than once. I also don’t understand how the use of reference management software to identify duplicate reference can cause relevant studies to be overlooked. These statements needs to either removed or better explained as they will raise comments from review authors.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
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