Reviewer's report

Title: Enhancing the scoping study methodology: A large, inter-professional team’s experience with Arksey and O’Malley’s framework

Version: 5 Date: 19 November 2012

Reviewer: Maria Grant

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to and witness the development of this manuscript. It has improved significantly since its original submission in terms of clarity of purpose and the authors are to be commended on the work they have undertaken.

I have a number of final minor essential revisions to feedback:

On page three the authors indicate that they ‘drew entirely on the methods laid out in the 2005 framework by Arksey and O’Malley’ but on pages 14 and 15 subsequently state that adjustments were made to the number and role of reviewers and on page 16 that they ‘opted to adapt a typology chart from Rutten et al.’ This inconsistency needs to be addressed in the final manuscript.

In several places - including the second paragraph on page 8 and in Table 1 comparative recommendations - the authors emphasise that guidance on the kinds of research questions that scoping studies are most appropriate for would be beneficial. Although the authors do briefly discuss this on page 9, I would have liked to see these recommendations made more explicit in the text and in the abstract summary.

Please provide a link to reference 10 from the text on page 12 to your paper on the information needs continuum.

The recommendation to assemble ‘a small suitable team’ (page 13) appears to run counter to the authors’ statement that the benefits of a large team ‘far exceeded the challenges’. Please elaborate on how the recommendation regarding small teams should be interpreted.

I still believe that reporting the findings of the oncology review is a distraction from the purpose of this paper i.e. the scoping review methodology as experienced by a large interdisciplinary team together with proposed modifications, and should therefore be removed. However, the opening sentence on page 20 provides the opportunity to provide a citing reference to the review for those interested in finding out more.

Please provide a reference to the ‘knowledge synthesis methodology’ cited on page 21.

Acknowledging the changes recommended by the authors to facilitate a scoping
review within the context of a large interdisciplinary team, I would question whether the proposed change in emphasis from ‘rapidly’ to ‘thoroughly and thoughtfully’ (page 25) and adding a quality assessment step represents only a change in definition but instead a shift towards an alternative review methodology which might have been better suited to answer their original question (sic – page 8).

**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.