Reviewer's report

Title: Citation searching: a systematic review case study of multiple risk behaviour interventions

Version: 2 Date: 20 March 2014

Reviewer: Tamara Rader

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

No major compulsory revisions

Minor Essential Revisions

1. In the abstract, please include the definition of ‘citation searching’ that would distinguish it from reference list searching. Your definition is good, but it is not given until the 3rd paragraph of the main body.

2. Also regarding the definition: I have heard terms – “pearl growing”, “snowball technique”, and “forward citation tracking” to describe what you term “citation searching”. Is there a distinction or are these all synonyms?

3. On page 9 please define “h-index”

4. In the Results: please comment on approximately how much time citation searching took for each of the 4 citation resources including downloading, de-duplicating and screening of the citation searching results.

5. In the Discussion please consider the time factor when commenting on the value, feasibility and potential of this approach, given that studies would have been found in an updated traditional search anyway. Would it have made a difference if this were an update search of the review? i.e. would this have the potential to save time?

Discretionary Revisions

6. In the background section: please include 2 additional systematic review guides that recommend citation searching:


   Campbell Collaboration guidance http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/resources/research/new_information_retrieval_guide.php

7. I disagree that this topic and the complex nature of the intervention of this scoping review is a limitation. In fact, it is an appropriate choice of case. Complex, multidisciplinary interventions are exactly the situations that authors would consider citation searching. A question for future research would be whether citation searching can reduce the overall number of databases searched in such a review.
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