Reviewer's report

Title: Does anybody read "evidence-based" articles?

Authors:  
Dr Yoon K Loke (yoon.loke@clinpharm.ox.ac.uk)  
Mrs Sheena Derry (sheena.derry@clinpharm.ox.ac.uk)

Version: 2 Date: 1 Jul 2003

Reviewer: David L. L Streiner

Level of interest: A paper of considerable general medical or scientific interest

Advice on publication: Accept without revision

The authors appear to have addressed most of the issues raised by the reviewers. I don’t agree with all that they have said, but this is to be expected in a piece designed to stimulate a discussion.

In my previous review, I said that they did not have any evidence to support their statement that systematic reviews aren't read because of their style (although I believe this is true). They have addressed this concern in their revision. But, to bolster their argument (at the risk of appearing self-serving), they may wish to look at:


which shows that articles in non-archival medical "throw-away" journals are much more readable in terms of use of colour, larger type, more graphics, less demanding reading level, and so forth, than "academic" review articles.

The one area where I disagree with their reply regards my last comment, about the tenor of the editorial possibly affecting the hit rate. Critical editorials should result in fewer hits to the original article than laudatory ones; and those that give the bottom line again should result in fewer hits to the original. If, as I think, the editorials about an article are read before the article itself, the tone would be an important parameter in determining hit counts.

Competing interests:

None declared.