Reviewer's report

Title: Conducting a critical interpretive review of the literature on access to healthcare by vulnerable groups

Version: 2 Date: 5 June 2006

Reviewer: Zoe Garrett

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. In the discussion section the authors have reworded how CIS draws on conventional systematic reviewing techniques. Rather than saying it draws on the strengths of conventional systematic reviewing it now states that it is sensitised to the processes behind conventional systematic reviewing. However, the wording in the abstract and in the final concluding paragraph continues to state that the article builds on the strengths of conventional systematic review techniques. I would request that the authors also look at these paragraphs and rewrite them so that they now reflect the altered discussion section.

2. On page 17 the sentence "However, a conventional systematic review, by limiting the study types to be included, would have synthesised a much smaller fraction" I honestly believe this is wrong and would ask that it is reconsidered. Firstly a conventional systematic review may find many ways of limiting the number of included studies, study types is one way, but is not the only way and does not need to be used at all if it is not relevant to do so. Second, there is no real reason why a conventional systematic review necessarily has to synthesise a much smaller proportion of studies. Systematic reviews using meta-analysis can include large numbers of studies if they are available.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests