Reviewer's report

Title: Development of AMSTAR: a measurement tool to assess reviews.

Version: 1 Date: 11 September 2006

Reviewer: Graham Mowatt

Reviewer's report:

General

The authors have developed a potentially useful additional instrument for assessing the methodological quality of systematic reviews, using appropriate methods to arrive at the final, brief, 11-item questionnaire, including appraising a substantial number of reviews as part of the process of developing the instrument.

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

None

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

P5 line 6 'assessing' should be 'assessed'

p5 line 13 there is a reference to Appendix A but there was no Appendix A in my version of the paper

p6 line 14 'processed' should be 'process'

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

p3 3rd para 3rd sentence 'the available instruments...are not particularly user friendly'. In terms of? Suggest adding a few words at the end of the sentence providing more information on why the available instruments are not considered to be user friendly.

p4 line 11 suggest giving more information on what is meant by 'good' face and content validity or just removing the word 'good'.

p16 Table 2 question 4. In all of the other questions the optimal answer is 'Yes'. Suggest rewording question 4 likewise to make it consistent with the others, eg Were reports included irrespective of their status of publication (i.e. grey literature was not used as an exclusion criterion)?

p17 question 11. Conflict of interest may extend beyond sources of support. Suggest amending the sentence along the lines of 'Sources of support and other potential conflicts of interest should be clearly acknowledged both in terms of the systematic review and the included studies.'

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