Reviewer’s report

Title: Abstracts in high profile journals often fail to report harm.

Version: 6 Date: 29 January 2008

Reviewer: Sally Hopewell

Reviewer’s report:

28 January 2008

Thank you for asking me to review this revised manuscript which sets out to determine how frequently harms are reported in abstracts of randomized trials in high profile medical journals. I believe that the authors have addressed many of my initial comments, however, several minor considerations remain which I will outline below:

Minor Essential Revisions

Page 4; para 1: the authors state that “a random number table was used to get a sample of RCTs published in 2003.” I think it would be helpful to still be more explicit here.

Page 6; para 1: the authors report that only 34% of abstracts reported any kind of numerical data. Again I think it would be helpful to report what sort of numerical data was reported and more importantly what was reported for the remaining 76% of abstracts reporting harms.

Page 9; para 2: reviewer 4 recommended that the authors take into account the publication of a very recent extension to the CONSORT Statement for reporting abstracts of randomized trials. This has not been addressed by the authors and could be mentioned here as many of the issues brought forth by the authors are covered in these publications.


What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'