Reviewer's report

Title: Setting an Agenda for Comparative Effectiveness Systematic Reviews in CKD Care

Version: 2 Date: 16 May 2012

Reviewer: Allison Tong

Reviewer's report:

Dr. Crews and colleagues engaged stakeholders (n=11) to prioritise topics for comparative effectiveness research (CER) systematic reviews in chronic kidney disease stages I-IV. They also conducted literature searches to assess the feasibility of conducting CER systematic reviews on topics identified as high priority by the stakeholders. This is a novel initiative.

The following are suggestions and comments for discretionary revisions:

• Can the authors define “community stakeholders” earlier in the manuscript? Did they include policy makers and clinicians only? More details could be provided, including justification as to why no patients with CKD were included.

• Diversity in opinions among stakeholders was observed, one reason being that some were concerned about the paucity of evidence to compare existing strategies of care in certain topic areas (page 9). It would be interesting to understand the range of reasons underpinning the stakeholder decisions. For example, were the teleconferences recorded and transcribed, then analysed to identify reasons for identification and ranking of topics, or discussion around the overall rankings? Did the documents allow participants to make additional comments, which could also be analysed?

• More details on how the authors calculated of summary scores/global rank is suggested.

• The discussion could include how to make decisions about conducting CER systematic reviews in terms of rank and feasibility scores; do both carry equal weight?

• Additional suggestions for future research could be stated including prioritisation activities with patients diagnosed with CKD. Or, to assess and compare priorities between different groups of stakeholders including policy makers, funding agencies, clinicians, patients etc.

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

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'