Reviewer’s report

Title: The evaluation of an evidence-based clinical answer format for paediatricians

Version: 1 Date: 30 November 2011

Reviewer: Teresa Jones

Reviewer’s report:

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS
1. There is some confusion over the main purpose of the survey when moving from the Background, paragraph 5 to the Results section, Survey responses to questions about the Clinical Answer, paragraphs 2 & 3, the Limitations and then on to the Conclusions. Is this survey just to test the format of the CA or is the content also being tested in some way? Has any separate work been carried out on the content of the CA? This does need to be corrected but hopefully should be about clarification and not involve too much time.

2. The sources used to contact paediatricians were quite varied with a number of different approaches, which was good. The work was sponsored by the Cochrane Collaboration Opportunities Fund and therefore the use of predominantly European sources is understandable, however as the authors were based in Canada and Australia and the study is not claimed to be European, there perhaps should be broader coverage of countries other than European countries. An explanation of why these sources were chosen and what they would therefore represent would be helpful information. Also, a more minor point, is there any reason not to state the name of the European country whose national Paediatric Clinical Standards website was used to post the survey?

3. The online survey would seem to be an appropriate tool to use in the first instance to collect this data but the numbers of respondents are quite small and therefore may not be representative, particularly if this tool is aimed at many countries. This should be discussed in the limitations.

4. I would like to see detail on the numbers of participants from each of the different contact sources as well as response rates to the e-mail distributions. These data would then provide information for discussion in the Limitations section.

5. The Limitations need to be added to as detailed earlier.

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS
1. I would be uncertain about the use of the NPS as in the given reference it is stated that it was designed for use in business to expand growth. I am not familiar with the NPS and therefore would appreciate a little more detail or references to its use in the context of this work.

2. The Discussion section, CA format changes would perhaps be more
appropriate in the Results section.

3. As mentioned previously there are no details of any work carried out on the clinical content of the CA though systematic reviews, both Cochrane and non-Cochrane, have been stated to be the source of the data. If there has been work carried out on the clinical content then it would be useful to state this. If there has not been any then perhaps detail of how the data has been derived should be included.

4. I would contest the use of the term ‘strongly’ in the last sentence of the Abstract.

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