Reviewer's report

Title: Internet-based search of randomised trials relevant to mental health originating in the Arab world.

Version: 1 Date: 14 April 2005

Reviewer: Zbys Fedorowicz

Reviewer's report:

General
This is a very interesting study which clearly identifies the shortcomings of research and its publication within our region. The thoroughness of the search conducted by the authors is perhaps a reflection of the authors involvement with the work of The Cochrane Collaboration.
I have only a few comments:
Pg 4 "This paper describes a search for.." I think it may be prudent to more clearly define/expand "manual" and electronic with specific reference to the title "internet based". Handsearching is also manual but could also be conducted on an internet based (electronic) source, either a journal or d/base.

Errata
Pg 2 "to be few trials from (?the) Arab world...."
Pg 3 "one controlled experiment from (?the)Middle East...."
Pg 6 "the only database (reproducing?)contents(?TOCs or full text?)pages of journals...."

Conclusion:
The conclusion could perhaps more closely refer to the Title ie the paucity of RCTs available/accessible on the internet.
I think the last sentence could be rephrased slightly perhaps:
Although our research has illustrated the apparent lack of rcts on mental health in the Arab world that are accessible thru the internet, it should be noted that there is a substantial body of work being conducted and published in other formats.

The authors are to be congratulated for clearly identifying some of the issues of publication and/language bias. Issues of indexing bias which although not covered in this paper also have a major role to play.
Well done

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

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

As above

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

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