Reviewer's report

Title: Public Health Economics: a systematic review of guidance for the economic evaluation of public health interventions and discussion of key methodological issues

Version: 2 Date: 6 August 2013

Reviewer: joanne gray

Reviewer's report:

This systematic review is policy relevant and contributes to the literature in so far it attempts to summarise the current position of health economics in relation to economic evaluation of public health interventions. This latter contribution should not be underestimated. The methods undertaken in the review are sound which are utilised to address a clearly focused question.

However I amke the following comments in terms of revisions:

Major Compulsory revisions

There are no limitations of the analytical approach taken in this review or indeed any wider limitations of the article.

The analytical framework from which the articles have been analysed should be further developed. This presents as a narrative/decriptive account and lacks any underpinning theretical or otherwise as a rationale/framework for analysing the papers. The authors use 3 themes as a framework for presenting results: UK guidance, international guidance and individual commentators. This should be further developed using a core set of themes (all of which may not be relevant to each guideline published) such as valuation paradigm, research paradigm, theretical basis etc. This would then allow for further synthesis, discussion and the presentation of the paper's limitations ...all of which i think if addressed would add to the contribution of the paper to the current evidence base.

Minor Essential revisions

The authors present a checklist for consideration of public guidance for the economic evaluation of public health interventions. Further discussion of how this was developed and it's relevance to the rest of the paper would be useful.

Discretionary Revisions

Check that all relevant years of publication appear in reference list.

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

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

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