Reviewer's report

Title: Current experience with applying the GRADE approach to public health interventions: an empirical study

Version: 2 Date: 10 December 2012

Reviewer: Rebecca Armstrong

Reviewer's report:

This article describes a study to explore the use of GRADE in the development of public health guidelines. This is a very important and contemporary topic of particular interest to those involved in guideline development and evidence synthesis more broadly.

The study design is justified but some additional information to justify approach could be included for clarity. The paper could be strengthened by some additional information about analysis. What methods were used and who conducted the analysis? Reasons for lack of ethics approval is described.

The categorisation of the issues raised by participants is appropriate. This paper acknowledges the limitations of the study but tackles the issues being discussed and documents these. This is really useful and incredibly important in supporting further testing of GRADE.

The conclusions of the study are appropriate to the study aims and findings. The authors identify the need for the GRADE working group to consider the issues raised in the paper even if based on perceived need. This is an important point in 'bringing the field along'.

So, I really have very few comments/additions. I think this is a really useful paper. I don't think it resolves any issues but documents them. Well done to the authors and I look forward to the next phase of this study.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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