Reviewer's report

Title: Measuring use of research evidence in public health policy: A policy content analysis

Version: 2
Date: 17 January 2014

Reviewer: Gabriel Moore

Reviewer's report:

General comments:
1. The question posed by the authors is clear and situated well in the scope of current knowledge. The potential benefits of new knowledge from the study are clearly articulated. The methods are clearly described and are replicable and the data appear sound. Overall, the discussion addresses the aims of the study and the limitations are adequately addressed. The conclusions are well supported by the data.

Major Compulsory Revisions
Nil

Minor Essential Revisions
2. There is some inconsistency in the terminology used in the manuscript (including in the tables) which I found confusing. For example, ‘Clinical Judgement’ is variously called ‘Clinical/Medical Justification’, ‘Clinical Justification’, and ‘Clinical/Medical Evidence’, ‘Claims decision making’ is also called ‘compensation decision making’ (page 9).
3. There are a couple of typos in the text, on page 3 paragraph 2. ‘... the development (of) evidence-informed products...' and ‘In Australia, government healthcare policies are now required to be based on research evidence’ or ‘Australian government healthcare policies are now required...’.

Discretionary Revisions
4. It would be helpful if the results were ordered in the same sequence as the aims and discussion.
5. The recommended solution to the policy problem is to develop an evidence based quality standard to be used as a tool, with regular review of policies (as does the Australian Medicare Benefits Schedule). Are there other approaches used internationally in injury compensation or comparable policy areas that might usefully be considered here (given that the international aspect is highlighted elsewhere in the article)?
6. The discussion on the use of academic research evidence seems to address firstly its use in claims decision making, and second its use in policy development, as set out in Table 3. The proposal to develop an evidence quality
standard and have regular review process sits in the discussion on policy development. However the link between the problems and solution is not quite clear. Is the evidence quality standard intended to addresses both needs ie introduce high level evidence to improve policy development and claims decision making? Or are the authors saying that addressing policy development will lead to better claims decision making and therefore introducing the evidence quality standard and review process to improve policy development is the key strategy?

7. An example of an evidence quality standard would be helpful.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.