**Author's response to reviews**

**Title:** Identifying Strategies to Improve Access to Credible and Relevant Information for Public Health Professionals: A Qualitative Study

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Response to Reviewer's Report:

We appreciate the time the reviewer took to review our manuscript for a second time, finding it much improved. We have responded to the suggested discretionary revisions below as indicated in bulleted italics:

In the beginning the authors quote Jenicek's definition of evidence-based public health practice. That makes me expect a little more focus on the evidence-based perspective. Therefore:

p. 23, I think it would be relevant to mention the Cochrane Library as one of the primary information resources for evidence-based public health practice. The database of systematic reviews in the Library includes at least 201 reviews of interest to public health (http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/cochrane/activities/reviews.htm) and there are several protocols of reviews to come. Also, the other databases in the Library may have reviews of interest; DARE, HTA and the economic studies in NHS.

- We have included a reference to the Cochrane Health Promotion and Public Health Field website at the top of p. 24 and noted its limitation in breadth of topics covered.

p.27 Our experience is that practitioners very seldom use such advanced mechanisms as putting filters on their topic search (which also tends to be very simple), as were also experienced in this study. However, good filters to facilitate searches in bibliographic databases are and will be important for locating studies for reviews and for particularly skilled and interested users.

- We have amended the sentence that now spans pages 27-28 as follows: “There is clearly a need to develop and promote more and better search terms and filters for PH since these will be important for locating studies for reviews and for skilled and interested users.”

p.28 a) I think the authors are right in their assessment that there are a lack of information sources in public health. However, I also think that the main, and more serious problem, actually is a lack of good primary research that may be systematically reviewed.

- We have added the second reasons suggested as follows on p. 29: “A second reason that PH practitioners have fewer resources available to them is a lack of good primary research in PH that can be systematically reviewed [refs. to Anderson, Brownson et al 2005 and Kiefer et al 2005 have been...
added]; however, PH practitioners also do not always have ready access to the best evidence that is available such as basic facts and expert opinion.”

p. 28 b) Again, regarding the use of Jenicek's definition, I find it somewhat peculiar that there are not more examples on evidence-based information sources among the examples on good tools in clinical medicine. For instance, Cochrane Library (which no doubt reviews more clinical studies than public health), Bandolier, ACP Journal Club or Best evidence, and Clinical Evidence. UpToDate is not (yet) what we understand with an evidence-based information resource.

- Also on p. 29, we have clarified the distinction between evidence-based resources like Cochrane and reference resources like UpToDate as follows: “The former include tools such as information sources that summarize and critique findings from research reports (e.g., Cochrane Systematic Reviews) [ref. added]; those for identifying and accessing a broad range of information including basic facts, research findings, expert opinion and sometimes associated evidence ratings (e.g., electronic texts such as UpToDate) [45]; automatic notification services (e.g., bmj.com Email alerting service) [46]; and periodic, discipline-specific literature updates with summaries and commentaries (e.g., Journal Watch) [47].”