Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 15 March 2006

Reviewer: louise forsetlund

Reviewer's report:

General
I have reviewed the manuscript for a second time, and I find that much have been improved. There are only some points, I would like to make - which I would label Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore):

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.

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.

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.
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.

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

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

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.