Reviewer's report

Title: The effectiveness of clinical computerized guidelines in the process of care: a systematic review

Version: 1 Date: 11 May 2009

Reviewer: Pierre Durieux

Reviewer's report:

This article is a systematic review on the effectiveness of clinical computerized guidelines on process of care.

This article concerns an interesting topic, however several key methodological aspects of a systematic reviews are lacking or are too imprecise. For this reason, I think that this article cannot be accepted for publication. In addition, it does nor add any new information compared to recent publications on the same subject.

1. The authors do do define clearly which study designs are taken into account: observational studies is too much imprecise to be accepted. For example, how interrupted time series, controlled before after studies or uncontrolled before after studies are taken into account?

in the paragraph "inclusion and exclusion criteria" they say that they will compare electronic guidelines with what they name traditional methods. In the following phrase the comparison arm is routine care which is different.

They exclude studies involvins children because they say that there is a problem of adherence to guidelines in this age group but, as far as we understand the paper, interventions are on health professionals, not on patients.

2. Data extraction: it is unacceptable to say that positive or negative effect of intervezntion were defines according to the authors' opinion. Outcomes presented in each paper should have been reviewed and analysed by the authors according to pre defined criterias.

3. Quality assessment. Not clear for me. What do the authors means by "appriprate statistical analysis". What about cluster trials, did they review if and how the authors took into account the cluster effect in their analysis.

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
no