Reviewer's report

Title: Estimating travel reduction associated with the use of telemedicine by patients and healthcare professionals: proposal for quantitative synthesis in a systematic review

Version: 3 Date: 27 June 2011

Reviewer: Malinee Laopaiboon

Reviewer's report:

My concern is still the criteria of quality assessment on 'study design' domain. I agree with the author's response 'All classifications indicate that prospective studies provide stronger evidence than retrospective studies. Also, prospective collection of data provides a stronger evidence base than estimates based on expert opinion.'

1) For example, if there is a descriptive paper prospectively collect data on avoidance of travel or referrals through use of telemedicine, it will be scored 3.

2) For the other paper of prospective study that estimates of travel or referrals avoided through use of telemedicine based on the opinions of the investigators, it will be scored 2.

If we consider strength of design, example 1), descriptive study is weaker than example 2), prospective design. But the authors will give score 3 for 1) and 2 for 2) because the data of travel avoided is more reliable in 1). So the assessment is base on 'reliable of outcome measure' rather than 'study design'.

Please make it clear the appropriate criteria under each heading.

Even this is a minor point, it can affect to the validity of the review results.

The other issues are ok.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests