Reviewer’s report

Title: What is preventable harm in healthcare? A Systematic Review of definitions

Version: 3 Date: 5 March 2012

Reviewer: Hisham Aljadhey

Reviewer’s report:

1. The importance of the study and knowing the definition for preventable harm needs to be emphasized in the introduction and the abstract.
2. The review focused on one definition. However, it will be nice if you can mention definitions that are related like: harm, seriousness….etc.
3. Do you think that a qualitative design by asking experts in the field will yield better outcome on defining preventable harm?
4. I agree that defining “preventable harm” is important. But I think more important is how to operation a definition.
5. Page 7, second paragraph: “We estimated the agreement between ….” Need more explanation.
6. Page 10: “interventions used to prevent harm” I think this is outside the focus of the study. Also, interventions will be a subject for another systematic review. And need to be specific if interventions in hospitals or primary care setting. I recommend not including this paragraph.
7. The last sentence in Page 10 “Historical comparison”. This is not clear to the reader how this will be definition for preventable harm!
8. Figure 2: What is the scale for the Y axis?

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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