Reviewer's report

Title: Converting systematic reviews to Cochrane format: a cross-sectional survey of Australian authors of systematic reviews

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Reviewer: Ms Ann mckibbon

Level of interest: A paper of considerable general medical or scientific interest

Advice on publication: Accept after discretionary revisions

This report is interesting to all those who produce systematic reviews, not only the Australian authors or membeers of the Australasian Cochrane Centre. My revision suggestions are discretionary although I would stongly encourage the authors to report their response rate in a more favourable way. They started out with 73 authors with contact information. Of these, 21 surveys came back with an "undeliverable" address. To me, these 21 addresses were not valid. Therefore I would suggest that the return rate is 88% (48 of 52) and not 63%.

I would like to see URLs embeded into the text of the document for the Cochrane Database and DARE and the ACC also. Emails of the authors or a general ACC email might also be added if the authors agree.

The interesting analysis of potential numbers of new abstracts could be in the results section, not the discussion section? I would have moved it up--an important and interesting aspect of the survey. Explanation of the forumla could be clearer.

Is the survey available for others to use? If so, could this be made explicit in the paper and maybe a URL to get it?

Thanks for the opportunity to review this paper.

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Competing interests:

None declared.