Reviewer's report

Title: A critical appraisal of systems for grading the quality of evidence and the strength of recommendations

Version: 1 Date: 22 March 2004

Reviewer: Michael Bigby

Reviewer's report:

General

Grade 1

This paper represents an important contribution to the effort to grade levels of evidence. The authors address many of the difficulties of the currently available grading systems. They express many of the frustrations I have personally had in using and trying to teach the use of these systems.

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

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

The authors should search the paper and remove all uses of “this” as a noun. In most cases it is entirely unclear to what “this” refers.

P7. All but the first sentence of the first paragraph in the results section should be moved to the discussion section.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests: