Reviewer's report

**Title:** Interventions aimed at reducing problems in adult patients discharged from hospital to home: a systematic meta-review.

**Date:** 16 January 2007

**Reviewer:** Jane McCusker

**Reviewer's report:**

**General**

The article has been carefully written and the review methods used appear to be appropriate. The text is, however, quite lengthy and could probably be decreased substantially by the use of tables to present most of the results. This would facilitate the reader’s task.

This is a potentially important and useful article for people trying to plan and/or evaluate interventions for patients being discharged home from hospitals. The results can help identify reviews that are relevant in the large literature on the subject. Unfortunately, as noted by the authors, there is very little evidence, from good quality randomized trials, of the benefits of these various discharge interventions. Another disquieting finding is that, although many of the reviews address the same subject matter, there is very little overlap, according to the authors, in the numbers of studies included in more than one review. It would be helpful if the authors could give more insight into this latter result. Did they attempt to repeat the search strategy reported, for example, and could they validate the articles included or excluded? If, in fact, articles were overlooked that should have been included in some reviews, the conclusions may need to be revised.

**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 following minor problems were noted: (1) inclusion criteria is two words, not one; (2) there is some overlap or repetition of methods within the results, for example, page 14, second paragraph, repeats some of the methods already described; (3) page 18, middle section on outcomes, end of first sentence: remove the comma; (4) same page, last sentence: change “statistical” to “statistically”.

**Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)**

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

**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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests