Reviewer's report

**Title:** Hospital-based methods for developing evidence-based clinical practice guidelines in Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand: Need for a better way?

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**Reviewer:** John Alasdair A Millar

**Reviewer's report:**

I enjoyed the paper and in particular the list of headings under "results and discussion". I feel that any paper using qualitative research methods should discuss the extent to which the results are capable of being generalised or whether they simply reflect the prejudices of the small population who were questioned. I also feel that it needs to be more focused on what sort of guidelines are being considered. Medical guidelines are heavily focused on therapeutics, whereas nursing guidelines are more prescriptive and have an administrative function. In fact, the philosophical approaches of the various health professions can be quite different, and this is inevitably reflected in the kind of guidelines each produces.

The paper does not contain any examples of guidelines, how they were developed and how their recommendations relate to the evidence base. The absence of an evidential translation between the clinical evidence and the recommendations made is very important to my mind and even well regarded international guidelines fail in this respect eg the ACCP guidelines for thromboprophylaxis. In addition, guidelines can provide advice that is not supported by evidence and in fact the evidence may be the reverse of what is recommended - for example, the continuing presence of b-blockers in guidelines on the treatment of hypertension in a setting where the clinical evidence suggests they do not work, or the questionable guidelines supporting thrombolysis in the acute phase of stroke. How do these circumstances come about? The authors approach but do not get to grips with the problems inherent in obtaining agreement amongst the individuals in guidelines committees over specific provisions in controversial areas, where the need for compromise and agreement leads to a "watering down" of recommendations, leading to the production of guidelines that are unlikely to be followed in practice. Was there any evidence of such processes in their work?

Overall I think this is a worthwhile contribution to the field but would prefer the discussion to be more focused on the underlying questions of the need for guidelines and their weaknesses.

**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.