Reviewer's report

Title: Quality control for drug management programs: Is quality reported in the literature?

Version: 1 Date: 11 November 2008

Reviewer: Damin Si

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Major Compulsory Revisions

General comments
This review paper reports on how drug management programs are evaluated in the US context. It provides useful frameworks to categorise drug management programs and their outcome measures. However, as a reader, I also have a burning desire to know “what is the impact of these programs on health plans and patients”. Unfortunately the program impact is not thoroughly reported by the authors (only reported as two special cases), even not listed as an objective. A systematic review like this involves tremendous effort and time in relation to conceptualisation, literature searching, synthesis of evidence and so on. Sufficiently Reporting of data on effectiveness (impact) of drug management programs would add substantial weight to the review and augment its potential for greater implications for policy, practice and research.

Minor Essential Revisions

Specific comments

1. For a systematic literature review, it has been widely recognised to have two reviewers independently screening articles and retrieving data (the ‘gold standard’). It seems that in some cases that only one reviewer made decision on inclusion of articles as described by the authors. It is not clear whether data were abstracted independently by two reviewers.

2. The authors mentioned that 78 “articles” or 76 “studies” were included in the review. It is understandable that one single study may lead to multiple publications. If this is the case, the authors need to spell out. Also on page 8, there is an apparent error regarding the use of 78 in the 13th row.

3. The results section: 1) some table numbers have not been adequately referred to in the texts; 2) there was substantial duplication of information reported in the texts and presented in tables. The authors could cut the text description and make it concise.

4 There is only one reference (84) related to the discussion section. The discussion needs to be strengthened by drawing more national and international literature for comparison and contrasting and so on.
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.