Author's response to reviews

Title: Improving the Use of Research Evidence in Guideline Development: Introduction

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Improving the Use of Research Evidence in Guideline Development:
Introduction

Responses to referees’ comments

Reviewer: Margaret Haugh
This is an introduction to a series of reviews that promise to be very interesting. Some of the sentences are a little long, and the readability could be improved by shortening some of them.

Response
Thank you.

We have proof read all of the papers now with an eye for long sentences and readability.

Reviewer: Jako Burgers
This well-written paper is an introduction to a series of papers, as an answer to a request from the WHO to improve the use of research evidence in recommendations, guidelines and policies. This seems self-evident for guidelines since principles of EBM are dominating guideline development for years (Shekelle PG, Woolf SH, Eccles M, Grimshaw J. Developing guidelines. BMJ 1999;318:593-596). Therefore the authors could illustrate that research evidence is often not sufficiently used in guidelines. For instance: 1) Silagy CA. Stead LF. Lancaster T. Use of systematic reviews in clinical practice guidelines: case study of smoking cessation. BMJ 2001;323:833-36. 2) Vigna-Taglianti F, Vineis P, Liberati A, Faggiano F. Quality of systematic reviews used in guidelines for oncology practice. Annals of Oncology 2006;17: 691–701. Furthermore, there is a difference between recommendations/guidelines (a guideline is a document including sets of recommendations) and health policies. I think that the use of research evidence in policies is less common than in guidelines. The authors may provide examples showing the negative consequences of not using research evidence in policies. This may better explain the background of the request from WHO and the need for this serie of papers. These are suggestions which the author can choose to ignore.

Response
Thank you.

We have added the following text at the end of the 6th paragraph of the text (page 4) with the two suggested references by Silagy and Vigna-Taglianti (thank you), eight other references regarding insufficiencies in guidelines development, including criticisms of WHO, and references regarding the need to use research evidence in health care management and policy.

The need for more rigorous processes is underscored by evidence of inconsistencies between the available evidence and expert recommendations [1,2], insufficient use of the available evidence [3,4], and other insufficiencies in how guidelines and recommendations are developed [5-12]. Similar criticisms have been raised and calls have been made for better use of research evidence for health care management and policy making, as well [13-15].

Other changes
We have edited the paragraph at the bottom of page 6 & top of page 7 (3rd to last paragraph in the text), which now reads:

*A draft of each review was first discussed and revised by the authors. The reviews were also circulated to the ACHR SURE members and discussed by the subcommittee. After peer review the articles were revised by the authors and updated if necessary. We are grateful to the editors of Health Research Policy and Systems for agreeing to publish these papers in their journal. In addition to benefiting from their editorial support, this has enabled us to take advantage of the BioMed Central’s open peer review system to help ensure the quality of our reviews and advice. We also believe that these reviews are of wide interest to other organisations and individuals that are responsible for developing guidelines or health policy.*