Reviewer's report

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

Version: Date: 15 April 2006

Reviewer: Jako Burgers

Reviewer's report:

This well-written paper is an introduction to a serie 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.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.