Reviewer's report

Title: Improving the Use of Research Evidence in Guideline Development: 4. Managing conflicts of interests

Version: Date: 3 May 2006

Reviewer: Hans V HV Hogerzeil

Reviewer's report:

General
Good subject, worth publishing, but paper needs to be written more carefully

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
The literature review is not fully complete (e.g. agreement by the major editors on managing conflict of interest; the current WHO reporting form for external experts
The abstract mentions conclusions which are not to be found in the paper; the paper ends rather abruptly
Missing points: Why WHO's plan is OK (as the authors seem to suggest)
Missing also: a clear separation of which recommendations are evidence-based, and which are more opinion-based.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
P. 6, para 3, line 3: "this report" - which report?
Most references are incomplete

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory 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.