Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 9 June 2006

Reviewer: Mike Kelly

Reviewer's report:

General
Boyd & Bero Improving the use of Research Evidence in Guideline Development: 4. Managing conflicts of interests

I am pleased to provide my report on the above article. This is well written and very clear. It deals with the important issues related to conflicts of interest and the problems attaching thereto. The relevant literature appears to have been reviewed and the degree of difficulty attaching to the process has been nicely described.

As this is part of a specially commissioned set of papers, as I understand it, I am not sure whether the other criteria set out in your request for review apply, but the paper is very timely because this issue is one of growing importance, it is well reasoned (and reasonable!) and is balanced.

The authors should note that NICE has been since April 2005 the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (although the acronym NICE remains unchanged) and that it is currently reviewing its policies on disclosure and conflict of interest.

I recommend publication subject to this small amendment.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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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)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential 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.