Reviewer’s report

Title: Improving the Use of Research Evidence in Guideline Development: 13. Adaptation, applicability and transferability

Version: 3 Date: 8 October 2006

Reviewer: Ian Graham

Reviewer’s report:

General
I am satisfied that my original concerns/issues have been adequately addressed.

On second reading of the paper, I found myself questioning what the difference between adaptation, applicability and transferability actually is. The authors provide a generic definition of adaptation but don’t formally define the other two terms other to say on page 4- adaptation involves… whether a guideline is applicable in a specific setting or transferable from one setting to another (are these synonymous? I assume that if it is not applicable it must not be transferable but could a guideline be transferable but not applicable?). I am presuming that applicability is what is being referred to in the abstract under the section-what should be done centrally and locally- bullet #4 about assessing needs, availability of resources etc. if so this would be helpful to state in the bullet. So is the thinking that local groups need to assess a guideline first for 1) transferability (is it potentially relevant in the local setting), 2) applicability (could it possibly be applied or implemented in the local setting), and then the last thing that must be considered is, 3) adaptation (what must be done to the guideline to contextualize and customize it to the local circumstance and facilitate its implementation and uptake). If applicability and transferability are distinguishable concepts then the items in the checklist in Table 1 should indicate which items belong to which concept. I am also wondering whether adaptation can only be done by the local guideline users but that the international guideline developer could consider applicability and transferability issues when developing the recommendations and be explicit about what types of contexts and settings their recommendations might ‘apply’ to or be ‘transferable’ too in order to facilitate the local users’ making decisions about its applicability and transferability.

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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)

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Discretionary Revisions (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.