Reviewer's report

**Title:** Prioritization strategies in clinical practice guidelines development: a case study

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 19 August 2009

**Reviewer:** Saravana Kumar

**Reviewer's report:**

Thank you for asking me to review this manuscript. Firstly, I would like to congratulate the authors on this interesting research. As they correctly identify, it is vitally important to prioritise the large amounts of efforts, resources and costs spent on undertaking guidelines and to date much of this is done in an ad-hoc basis. This innovative research provides a systematic approach to this process and provides an interesting perspective, using mixed methods, to prioritise clinical practice guidelines. So, well done!

There are however some comments I would like to make about this research. These are issues which require response from the authors.

1. Given that the authors have used multiple methods to achieve their objective, it would be most beneficial if there was a diagrammatic overview of the methods utilised and how they all “fit” together. As it stands, it is quite confusing to grasp different research methods and where they all “fit” in.

2. There is no mention of any ethical requirements being completed as part this research. As all primary research requires ethics clearance, I am unclear why no ethical requirement is reported.

3. The authors report that the PDT model chosen for this study is one which is already in existence. However there is no justification for why this is the case. Is it became it is the only available or because it is rigorous? More information is required.

4. As part of “Identification of criteria for PDT”, the authors report that they undertook a systematic review. This is incorrect. The authors undertook a systematic search of the literature and not a review. A systematic review is a series of steps, one part of which is a systematic search of the literature. This needs to be corrected.

5. There is little to no information on the sample selection proves. The authors mention that they “sampled 60 external stakeholders and end users of guidelines”. What type of sampling was used to identify them? What were the sampling criteria? What was the bread down of sample based on stakeholder type? What about sampling bias? This section needs to be strengthened a great deal.
6. There is a very small section on qualitative analysis of PDT. Once again, with qualitative research it is imperative to provide adequate information in terms of sampling, data collection, data analysis and interpretation. How was bias avoided and rigour ensured? None of this provided in great deal. There are also statements here which are not explained nor referenced (symbolic structure and rhetoric identification).

7. I am not sure why this research is labelled as a “case study” given that the research methods used here does not fit “case study” requirements within qualitative research paradigm nor quantitative research paradigm. Could “pilot” be a better term?

While I am impressed with the topic this research addresses, I believe this manuscript could be strengthened by providing clarity, details on the methods and issues associated with ethics.

I wish the authors all the very best.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests