Reviewer's report

Title: Are reviewers suggested by authors as good as those chosen by editors? Results of a rater-blinded, retrospective study

Version: 1 Date: 4 March 2006

Reviewer: Elisabeth Paice

Reviewer's report:

General

1. This is a well-planned and intrinsically interesting and important paper.
2. Originality: It has unfortunately been 'pipped to the post' by a very similar paper published in JAMA in January 2006, which included bigger numbers, and reached similar conclusions. However, the authors have included reference to the JAMA paper, and there are differences in the acceptance rate of the journals that might have led (but didn't) to different results.

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

3. None

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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)

4. None

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

5. The paper would be strengthened if, as in the JAMA paper, the rate of agreement with the final editorial decision of author and editor nominated reviewers was compared.
6. Interest for the reader would be added if the authors explored any policy implications of their findings.

Which journal?: Appropriate or potentially appropriate for BMC Medicine: an article of importance in its field

What next?: Accept for publication in BMC Medicine after discretionary revisions

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.