Reviewer's report

Title: No Short-Cut in Assessing Trial Quality: A Case Study.

Version: 2 Date: 22 February 2008

Reviewer: David Moher

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Minor Essential Revisions

On page 2 (2nd full paragraph) the author states "Adequate concealment of randomized allocation". I think this should be changed to "Adequate allocation concealment". There are lots of other examples throughout the manuscript but I do not have the time to go through all of them. Earlier on in this paragraph the author states "Research has shown that the use of ..". Please provide a citation to support this perspective.

I think the conclusions section of the manuscript requires a substantive edit. In addition to the four limitations mentioned on page 13 another one is that very few people (and likely no systematic reviewers) will have 3 months to complete an in-depth analysis of a single article. This point needs to be mentioned explicitly.

On page 15 the paragraph beginning "Consider an analogy.." needs to be deleted. Similarly, on page 14, the section (1st line) beginning "Three, I was the sole" and ending with the "I believe, are worthy of attention" should be deleted.

I am somewhat concerned with the penultimate paragraph (page 16). While the "Burke" article might be problematic the peer review process it underwent was more than 15 years ago. Has peer review anything to say for itself since than and should these comments be couched in some recognition that the article in question was peer reviewed quite some time ago?

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.