Reviewer’s report

Title: Interventions Encouraging The Use of Systematic Reviews by Health Policymakers and Managers: A Systematic Review

Version: 1 Date: 27 October 2010

Reviewer: Pamela Royle

Reviewer’s report:

This paper addresses a question that is important to those who produced systematic reviews and reports based on systematic reviews to policy makers. It is methodologically well done. I have a few suggestions for improvement below:

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. The reason for the paucity of empirical data may be that the authors have missed an important body of data relevant to their question by not including health technology assessment (HTA) reports, as these are based on systematic review of the literature and are specifically aimed at policy makers. Indeed, the definition of HTA - taken Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH) web site http://www.cadth.ca/index.php/en/hta/faq is:

   A Health Technology Assessment (HTA) is an evaluation of the clinical effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and broader impact of drugs, medical technologies, and health systems, both on patient health and the health care system. During the assessment, data from research studies and other scientific sources are systematically gathered, analyzed, and interpreted. The findings from this process are then summarized in reports that translate scientific data into information that is relevant to decision making.

   Therefore I suggest that the search strategy should also add another line to include health technology assessments eg. (technology assessment* adj3 health) combined with the terms for implementation and use etc.

   Also, it could be useful to search the ‘Methodolgy Register’ and the ‘Technology Assessments’ databases on the Cochrane Library

2. Confusing (and contradictory) use of the terminology ‘studies’ and ‘articles’.
   E.g. in the abstract it says: …four of these studies met all inclusion criteria. Three articles described one study..

   Think it should be: …four of these articles met all inclusion criteria. Three articles described one study..

   Also, the first line of the Conclusions says: this review found four studies – suggest it is reworded to say: this review found four articles describing two studies

3. The results for Dobbins 2009 as explained in Table 1 and the Results section
of the paper are not very clear - perhaps clarify that there were two outcomes and it was not significant for the primary one but significant for the secondary one i.e.

The primary outcome assessed the extent to which research evidence was used in a recent program decision. The intervention had no significant effect on global evidence-informed decision making (p < 0.45), although all groups improved to some extent.

The secondary outcome measured the change in the sum of evidence-informed healthy body weight promotion policies or programs being delivered at health departments. For public health policies and programs, a significant effect of the intervention was observed (p < 0.01).

4. In the Discussion - on page 14 middle of line 6 from ‘Research use was further … research culture was high – suggest that this goes into the Results section

Minor Essential Revisions
Font size changes throughout the paper.

**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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests’