Author's response to reviews

Title: Strategies for updating clinical practice guidelines: a systematic review

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Dr Denise O'Connor

The Implementation Science Editorial Team

Article title: Strategies for updating clinical practice guidelines: a systematic review
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Authors: Martínez García, Laura; Arévalo-Rodríguez, Ingrid; Solà, Ivan; Haynes, R Brian; Vandvik, Per Olav; Alonso-Coello, Pablo; the Updating Guidelines Working Group.
Journal: Implementation Science

On behalf of the rest of co-authors I would like to thank you for your interest in our paper. Below we have addressed your final comments about our manuscript.

Thanks for considering,
Dr. Laura Martínez García.
Comment 1
In light of revised title of review (to include strategies for monitoring CPGs response to Shekelle review), should the following sentences also be updated
1. Abstract/background/last sentence: “The objective of the study is to systematically identify, describe and assess strategies for monitoring and updating CPGs.”
2. Abstract/study design and setting: “We conducted a systematic review of studies evaluating one or more methods of monitoring or updating CPGs or recommendations.”
3. Methods/eligibility criteria/first sentence: “Type of study: We included studies evaluating one or more methods of monitoring or updating evidence-based CPGs or recommendations”.
4. Discussion/first sentence: “Our systematic review shows that the available research about the monitoring and updating of CPGs is scarce and little is known at present about the most efficient way of keeping guidelines valid.”
5. Discussion/paragraph eight/first sentence: “All the studies described the composition of the updating working group involved in the monitoring or updating process, but the total number of participants and their roles were unclear.”
6. Discussion/paragraph nine/first sentence: “There is a need to develop more efficient monitoring and updating strategies for CPGs and, for this, more high quality research is crucial.”

Reply: We have modified the text accordingly and highlighted in yellow the changes:
1. Abstract/background/last sentence: “The objective of the study is to systematically identify, describe and assess strategies for monitoring and updating CPGs”.
2. Abstract/study design and setting: “We conducted a systematic review of studies evaluating one or more methods of updating (with or without monitoring) CPGs or recommendations”.
3. Methods/eligibility criteria/first sentence: “We included studies evaluating one or more methods of updating (with or without monitoring) evidence-based CPGs or recommendations”.
4. Discussion/first sentence: “Our systematic review shows that the available research about the monitoring and updating of CPGs is scarce and little is known at present about the most efficient way of keeping guidelines valid.”
5. Discussion/paragraph eight/first sentence: “All the studies described the composition of the updating working group involved in the updating process; however, the total number of participants and their roles was generally unclear”.
6. Discussion/paragraph nine/first sentence: “There is a need to develop more efficient monitoring and updating strategies for CPGs and, for this, rigorous research is crucial”.

Comment 2
In relation to Abstract/study design and setting/last sentence (p2) and Methods/Information sources and search (p6), please clarify whether study authors were contacted for the purpose of identifying other potentially relevant studies, or to obtain additional information regarding their study, or both.

Reply: We have modified the text accordingly and highlighted in yellow the changes:

1. Abstract/study design and setting/last sentence (p2): “If necessary we contacted study authors to obtain additional information”.
2. Methods/Information sources and search (p6): “If necessary we contacted study authors to obtain additional information”.

Comment 3
The last sentence in the Discussion is still a little unclear to me. Could you rephrase to improve clarity (perhaps, replace “a systematized” with “standardized” and remove “yet internationally”).

Reply: We have modified the text accordingly and highlighted in yellow the changes:

Discussion: “Second, the difficulty of synthesizing, evaluating and comparing complex methodological studies, without a standardized reporting, as opposed to systematic reviews [Error! Reference source not found.] or comparative effectiveness reviews [Error! Reference source not found.], makes the analysis and interpretation of results challenging.”

Comment 4
I would prefer you replace the first two sentences of the abstract/conclusions with the text from the first paragraph of the conclusions (main text) or a paraphrasing of this as I think there is a subtle difference in meaning between the two (re. use of restricted searches for updating). See suggested change below:

Abstract/conclusions: “There is limited evidence about the optimal strategies for monitoring and updating clinical practice guidelines. A restricted search is likely to be sufficient to monitor new evidence and assess the need to update; however, more information is needed about the timing and type of search. Only the exhaustive search strategy has been assessed for the update of CPGs. The development and evaluation of more efficient strategies is needed to improve the timeliness and reduce the burden of maintaining the validity of CPGs.”

Reply: We have modified the text accordingly and highlighted in yellow the changes:

Abstract/conclusions: “There is limited evidence about the optimal strategies for monitoring and updating clinical practice guidelines. A restricted search is likely to be sufficient to monitor new evidence and assess the need to update; however, more information is needed about the timing and type of search. Only the exhaustive search strategy has been assessed for the update of
CPGs. The development and evaluation of more efficient strategies is needed to improve the timeliness and reduce the burden of maintaining the validity of CPGs.

Additional changes

We have highlighted in yellow these additional changes:

1. **Authors**: To maintain homogeneity with previous article (Alonso-Coello P, Martínez García L, Carrasco Gimeno JM, Solà I, Qureshi S, Burgers JS. The updating of clinical practice guidelines: insights from an international survey. Implement Sci. 2011;6:107) we have modified authors citation: “Martínez García, Laura¹; Arévalo-Rodríguez, Ingrid²; Solà, Ivan¹; Haynes, R Brian³; Vandvik, Per Olav⁴; Alonso-Coello, Pablo¹; for the Updating Guidelines Working Group”.

2. **Authors’ contributions**: We have update Authors’ contributions:
   “Conceiving the review: Laura Martínez García (LMG), Pablo Alonso Coello (PAC).
   Undertaking searches: Ivan Solà (IS), LMG.
   Screening search results: LM, Ingrid Arévalo Rodríguez (IAR).
   Screening retrieved papers against inclusion criteria: LMG, IAR, IS.
   Extracting data from papers: LMG, IAR.
   Data management for the review: LMG.
   Writing the review: LMG, PAC.
   Comment and editing of review drafts: LMG, PAC, IAR, IS, R Brian Haynes, Per Olav Vandvik, Petra Díaz del Campo Fontecha, Maria Dolors Estrada Sabadell, Elvira García Álvarez, Javier Gracia San Román, Anna Mariyanova Kotzeva, Flavia Salcedo Fernandez, María del Mar Trujillo Martín.
   Responsible for reading and checking review before submission: LMG, PAC”.

3. **Acknowledgements**: We have added in the acknowledgments the members of the group “The members of the Updating Guidelines Working Group are: Martínez García L, Arévalo-Rodríguez I, Solà I, Haynes RB, Vandvik PO, Alonso-Coello P, Díaz del Campo P, Estrada MD, García Álvarez EE, Gracia J, Kotzeva A, Salcedo-Fernandez F, Trujillo-Martín MM”.

4. **Collaborators**: We would like to include these members group as collaborators in the article. We understand that this is the way to do it to make sure they appear as such in PubMed and are considered as collaborators:
   - Díaz del Campo P
   - Estrada MD
   - García Álvarez EE
– Gracia J
– Kotzeva A
– Salcedo-Fernandez F
– Trujillo-Martín MM