Reviewer’s report

Title: Developing Clinical Practice Guidelines: Reviewing, reporting, and publishing guidelines; updating guidelines; and the emerging issues of enhancing guideline implementability and accounting for comorbid conditions in guideline development.

Version: 1 Date: 8 August 2011

Reviewer: Tim Stokes

Reviewer's report:

1. This is the third of three papers that together constitute an overview of clinical guideline development that is both very timely and important. The authors are collectively the international leaders in the field of guideline development methodology and their work in the 1990s and subsequently has been very influential in forming the methods of national guideline developers such as NICE in the UK. There is a need to update the original work of these authors (BMJ 1999) and the paper uses relevant more recent publications to update key aspects of guideline development methods. It is aimed at a general readership and is at an appropriate level of detail.

2. This paper specifically addresses three timely issues (reviewing, updating and co-morbidity).

3. The comments presented here constitute discretionary revisions.

4. The section on peer review and consultation could benefit from some minor restructuring so as to separate out the process of asking for detailed comments from named individuals and professional societies and formal public consultation with all relevant stakeholders. It would also benefit from reference to appropriate guideline methods manual (e.g., NICE) that set out in detail their procedures here.

5. A number of national guideline developers, including NICE, put great stress on contestibility as a core principle of their work - and an important way of achieving this is a process for consulting with stakeholders. NICE relies on consultation with stakeholders (with an expectation that experts in the field will register through their organisation as stakeholders and comment) and external statistical and health economic peer review by an independent third party (NCCHTA www.ncchta.org). Only occasionally, and when specifically indicated, does it seek additional external expert review from named individuals. Such individuals may be conflicted in terms of their interests - which will need to be declared. Reference could be made here to paper 1 and its discussion of COI.

Level of interest: An exceptional article

Quality of written English: Acceptable
**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I am employed by a UK NHS organisation (NICE) that has as one of its remits the development of clinical guidelines for use in the NHS.