Reviewer's report

Title: Guidance for updating clinical practice guidelines: a systematic review of methodological handbooks.

Version: 1 Date: 18 July 2013

Reviewer: Fiona Beyer

Reviewer's report:

General comment
This is generally a well-written review, and although my expertise is in systematic reviewing methodology rather than guideline writing and maintenance, it seems to me important to know if and how published methodology is lacking or inconsistent.

Major Compulsory Revisions
I have no major compulsory revisions.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. English language: although the English is generally very good, there are a couple of places where it’s not quite right (e.g. in Identification of New Relevant Evidence section “Furthermore, two handbooks proposes the editorial board to have…”). Also commas and semi-colons are not quite right in several places.
2. Table 1 is not referred to in the text.
3. Background: Suggest explicit objectives – it’s a clear background section which sets out the importance of updating guidelines, but it would be good to state at this point that you are both summarising the current state of international methodological guidelines, and also critically appraising it based on your previous work.
4. Methods: Data Extraction. Final 2 sentences of section are unclear: I don’t understand what is meant by “we considered a specific strategy”.
5. Results: Handbooks characteristics. Suggest reporting when handbooks were published, since it may be a reason for poorer updating content if they are older?
6. Conclusions: Suggest the recommendations from the discussion section are summarised in the conclusions section.
7. Acknowledgements: this has got mixed up with something else – would expect to see here the names of people who contributed to the work but are not authors.
8. References: reference 8 has an incomplete title (should be “…monitoring and updating…”).
9. Spacing hasn’t always worked in the references.
10. Figure 1: were there really no guidelines found in the NGC? Presumably this is after de-duplication (if so then specify).
Discretionary Revisions
11. Table of included handbooks: although tables 1 and 2 are useful, I think it would help the reader to see the handbooks listed with salient characteristics.
12. References: given that the paper is in English, it would be nice to see translated English titles of all the included handbooks.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests.