Reviewer's report

Title: Functional assessments used by occupational therapists with older adults at risk of activity and participation limitations: A systematic review

Version: 1  Date: 11 July 2012

Reviewer: Bianca Maria Buurman

Reviewer's report:

This protocol is well written and provides a thorough overview of what the authors will be doing. My major point is on the study designs the authors are including for this review, which I find to limited related to the research question.

Major compulsory revisions

Background
The authors provide a thorough literature review on previous submitted articles in the field of occupational therapy.
There were reviews conducted on the psychometric properties of measurement instruments in this population by other authors. Not specifically for occupational therapists, but in broader perspective. Are these not providing the necessary information? And if not, what is the extra dimension compared to these reviews that you will add?
For example Dekker J et al, 2005, J rehab medicine;
Buurman BM et al 2011, j clinical epidemiology
With the research questions on page 7: please specify that it concerns RCTs that you will be focusing on.
Page 7, second paragraph; please add references for the definition of patient at risk for functional decline. There are numerous studies that have indicated that pre-existing ADL impairments are a risk factor for functional limitations

Types of studies
For the topic of the review, scoping only to RCTs might be too limited. I would expect that studies addressing the topic of interest, eg psychometric properties, are also addressed in prospective cohort studies and studies focusing on diagnostic accuracy. These studies might be very valuable for the systematic review.

Setting and participants
The inclusion criteria are not completely clear to me. For example, if the intervention is focused on comprehensive geriatric assessment, in which an occupational therapist is included. Will this study be included yes or no? Or is the primary initiator of the intervention the occupational therapist. The current
definition might need to be little tighter.

Types of outcomes
Are there minimal requisites on what information needs to be reported on psychometric properties?

Risk of bias assessment: I do not agree with the authors on the risk of bias assessment. This point also relates to the above formulated comment on type of studies. Prospective cohort studies might also be included. If extracting psychometric properties from these studies, the QUIPS-tool can be used. For me it is relevant information is an assessment tool was used in a trial that was conducted properly, compared to the use in studies with a high risk of bias. I would advise to use the Cochrane risk of bias tool for RCTs.

Phase 2: psychometric evaluation
Good to use the COSMIN tool. Could the authors be more specific on the exact psychometric properties they will extract for the article?

Minor essential revisions
Please write out LORS, COPM etc the first time they are specified in the text.

Last sentence of psychometric evaluation: the author specified there is Zwakhalen (the name is not written in the right way)

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

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