Reviewer's report

Title: Designing an optimum search strategy for a diagnostic test accuracy review of psychometric instruments: a comparison of three methods in postnatal depression

Version: 3 Date: 18 July 2011

Reviewer: Margaret Sampson

Reviewer's report:

Comments to the authors

I am working off line and do not have access to the Venn diagram, but all other revisions seem to have been addressed adequately. Still, the new knowledge in this paper is extremely limited, and the authors have not developed that any further in this revision.

Now that the authors have worked out a methodology for evaluating filter performance, and identified a potentially interesting area, I would encourage them to assemble a sample of existing systematic reviews of psychometric tests that have used fairly robust multi-database and multi-modal searches (a couple of non-database searching methods such contacting experts, cited references, …) and, then test the searches with and without filters, to see which MEDLINE – indexed studies included in the review were or were not found with the 3 conditions tested here (no filter, filter a, filter b). Similar testing should be done in PsycInfo.

I would recommend a title change, as the current title almost implies that there is some original work in filter development here, and there is not. Please consider something along the lines of “Should methodological filters for DTAs be used in systematic reviews of psychometric instrument? As case study involving screening for postnatal depression.”

Level of interest: Reject as not of sufficient priority to merit publishing in this journal

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