Reviewer's report

Title: Impact of Quality Improvement Strategies on the Quality of Life and Well-being of Individuals with Spinal Cord Injury: A Systematic Review Protocol

Version: 1 Date: 7 January 2013

Reviewer: Marcel WM Post

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions

None

Minor essential revisions

1. Keywords: Please add one or more keywords referring to the nature of the interventions that are included in this review.

2. Methods/Design: Very good that the authors want to include also publications in other languages than English and unpublished data. It will however be very hard to include studies and unpublished data in, for example, Japanese or Afrikaans, and it would be good to mention that a bias towards published studies and English-language materials will nevertheless be likely.

Discretionary revisions

1. The review is focused on quality improvement strategies and self-management strategies. However, I feel these are separate topics that maybe deserve separate reviews. The authors should explain why they consider self-management strategies a subcategory of quality-of-care improvement strategies.

2. Introduction: the authors motivate their study stating that secondary complications are a major problem and that current care practices are not managing these adequately (page 4, top). Therefore it appears strange that the occurrence of secondary conditions, or decrease of frequency or severity of secondary conditions, are not the primary outcome measure in this review: I suppose improvement in this area would be the direct effect of quality improvement strategies. Indeed, physical well-being is a secondary outcome, and “symptoms related to SCI” are included in this concept (page 5), but such symptoms will only included if measured by specific standardized scales. That will work well in case of depression, but it appears unlikely and undesirable that, for example, number of re-hospitalizations or symptoms of urinary tract infections will be excluded as outcomes if not measured by a validated scale. Please clarify.

3. The authors might want to consider hand searching of some of the journals in the field of health care management too.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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