Reviewer’s report

Title: An assessment of the efficacy of searching in biomedical databases beyond MEDLINE in identifying studies for a systematic review on ward closures as an infection control intervention to control outbreaks.

Version: 1  Date: 19 September 2014

Reviewer: Su Golder

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to look at this interesting work. I only have a few minor comments regarding this straightforward study, which is based on established methods.

1. EMBASE should be Embase, would be good see CDSR abbreviation in brackets after full database title
2. Table 1: would benefit from full number of records in column for recall eg recall (n=97).
3. Table 1: the definition or equation for recall and sensitivity would be good here for clarity.
4. Equations for recall and sensitivity in the text may be good for clarity too.
5. I would suggest adding the following references;
6. It would be good to see in the discussion a comparison to the results from other information audits. For example, other studies that compared MEDLINE, Embase and CINAHL etc.
7. I think more clarity around the searches in LILACS would be good. Not sure I understood at what stage the Spanish speaker came into play and whether any of the 75 records were then retrieved.
8. Not sure the conclusions match the results. I understood that if you search Embase and CINAHL in addition to MEDLINE you retrieve 8 extra records and that other sources also identified 8 additional papers. Hence isn’t CINAHL, Embase and other sources to be recommended? Or is this a clarity issue?

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'