Author's response to reviews

Title: Evidence-based mapping of design heterogeneity prior to meta-analysis: a systematic review and research synthesis

Authors:

Michelle D Althuis (michelle@epicontext.com)
Douglas L Weed (douglaslweed@aol.com)
Cara L Frankenfeld (cfranken@gmu.edu)

Version: 2 Date: 2 April 2014

Author's response to reviews: see over
April 2, 2013

Dr. David Moher
Editor
*Systematic Reviews*

Dear Dr. Moher:

Attached please find a copy of our original manuscript entitled “Evidence-based mapping of design heterogeneity prior to meta-analysis: a systematic review and research synthesis.” We believe this manuscript is particularly timely and suited for *Systematic Reviews* because the topic has broad significance for reporting of meta-analyses. We present a relatively new systematic methodology for characterizing the study design heterogeneity prior to meta-analysis; a topic which experts agree is important, but for which there is very little formal guidance. We hope that our paper will provide a reminder of the importance of comprehensive and transparent reviews of the medical literature and ultimately lead to higher quality evidence to inform policy and public health decisions.

We have disclosed potential conflicts of interest in an Acknowledgements section at the end of the manuscript. We recognize that because this work was funded by The Coca-Cola Company it may be perceived as having an industry bias. Please know that one of my main goals as an independent researcher is to synthesize data with extraordinary clarity using transparent and reproducible methods – with the ultimate goal of a product that provides the reader with enough data from which to establish his/her own conclusions – and thereby facilitating objective research reporting.

Sincerely,

Michelle D. Althuis, PhD
EpiContext
Research Synthesis & Epidemiology Consulting
1115 East Capitol Street SE
Washington, DC 20003
Phone: (202)641-4543
Email: michelle@EpiContext.com