Reviewer's report

Title: Using text mining for study identification in systematic reviews: a systematic review of current approaches

Version: 1 Date: 14 October 2014

Reviewer: William Hersh

Reviewer's report:

This is a very well conducted and written systematic review on the use of text mining techniques to improve the efficiency of production of systematic reviews. The manuscript is easy to follow, and the authors are to be commended for thoroughly elucidating the issues and finding the evidence for each.

There are some minor essential revisions:

Page 14: “As mentioned in the Introduction, sensitivity is ...”

The paper has a Background and not an Introduction. In addition, they have used recall everywhere else in lieu of sensitivity, so should be consistent and stick with recall here.

Pages 36-38:

Some of their references have errors, which may have been a result for formatting problems in their bibliography manager. These include references 28, 32, and 65. In addition, some references have full first names (30, 67) whereas most have initials.

Finally, the article makes no mention of any studies that have assessed the efficacy of the manual non-automated approach to evidence identification. It might be nice to mention if any work has been done showing how often the baseline approach misses important studies.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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.