**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** Software Tools to Support Title and Abstract Screening for Systematic Reviews in Healthcare: An Evaluation

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 15 Oct 2019

**Reviewer:** Brian Hutton

**Reviewer's report:**

In this article the authors have performed an assessment of available software tools for title and abstract screening in systematic reviews, a clearly vital component to the systematic review process. The authors have looked at at a feature assessment (to assess availability of key components considered important for tools of this nature) as well as a small user survey across tools. I have provided thoughts below regarding the manuscript.

**General comments:**

The authors have presented a generally clear and readable document summarizing their approach and findings. I think spelling out the target audience for this work (it would seem to be focused not toward systematic review producers on a grander scale but perhaps junior researchers new to SR and perhaps graduate students gaining exposure to knowledge synthesis?) would be beneficial as I do not believe this will be of interest to all researchers who perform reviews. I feel that in not considering some of the more well known tools and some of the significant gains that can be acquired in adopting platforms that support the entire review process and which may contain additional highly relevant capabilities (advanced data collection, artificial intelligence capabilities, data security and other elements), the study is perhaps not as relevant and pertinent as it could be for a wider audience. Addressing this as a limitation of the study in the discussion section would also be worthwhile, perhaps this could be a means of focusing to whom the article is geared. The small nature of the user survey and the close ties of respondents in terms of setting also do not carry great weight. I am unfamiliar with the approach they've used to consider weights in the analysis, and thus perhaps other reviewers will be able to comment on concerns they might have (if any). Overall I did not consider the study to present details that will be of high interest to a wide range of readers.

**Minor comments:**

- in the abstract, I believe the authors mean to mention December 2018 rather than December 2019.

- I would perhaps spell out the DESMET abbreviation within the methods section so this is more clear.

- in Table 2, adding headers to columns 1 and 2 would be worthwhile, perhaps 'Respondent characteristic' and 'Categories' or something along those lines
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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