Reviewer's report

Title: Quality assessment of clinical practice guidelines for chronic kidney disease: a systematic review

Version: 1 Date: 13 Dec 2018

Reviewer: Robert Walker

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript has undertaken a systematic review of published clinical practice guidelines for chronic kidney disease (CKD). It analysed 6 specific domains related to different aspects of the CPGs in an attempt to score or recommend which of the guidelines have the best applicability to actual clinical practice. It is useful to have these guidelines reviewed and compared, particularly for those countries or societies who do not yet have suitable CPGs. It as the authors state, would reduce costs and resources required to develop such guidelines. Rather the specific societies could modify aspects that are then relevant to their own patient population.

I have a number of points that need to be addressed.

Some guidelines websites were accessed and reviewed but the CARI guidelines website was not accessed or referenced. See comments below.

I am not clear how the authors derived the stakeholder involvement. For example with the CARI guidelines they have only listed the summary reference (reference 21) they have not actually gone to the CARI website www.cari.org.au where there is very detailed information as to how the guidelines are developed, involvement of nephrologists, nurses, dietitians, and patient groups - The KHA -CARI is a joint group with representation from Kidney Health Australia (Consumer organisation) and the Australian and New Zealand Society of Nephrology as well as input from the Renal Society of Australasia representing the clinical side. Also the guidelines are for Australia and New Zealand not just Australia, please correct this. (Australasia represents both countries). So the CARI guidelines were developed by both the guidelines group under the auspices of ANZSN and KHA and they report back to ANZSN.
Whilst it is very important to compare the different guidelines, to me as a reviewer and reader of the article, the repeated comparisons of statistical variation between the guidelines do not really add any useful information over and above your classification of high, moderate or low. Also with each comparison, there is just a number which is not linked to a specific guideline or guidelines. It is very difficult to follow logically which guidelines are being referred to with each comparison. For example CPGs assessment according to recommendation - last paragraph on page 11. "The average score of the CPGs recommended for use in clinical practice was significantly higher than those recommended with modifications" does not really add a lot of extra helpful information.

Likewise the discussion is excessively long and repeats a lot of what has been covered in the results. I would recommend a very much shortened and pithy discussion, highlighting the positives of the high ranked guidelines and why. From a clinical perspective and use for the clinician reading this manuscript, who is looking for the best guidelines to follow, this is what they would be looking for.

Please confirm that you have included your review in the ‘Comments to Author’ box? 
As a minimum standard, please include a few sentences that outline what you think are the authors' hypothesis/objectives, their main results, and the conclusions drawn. Your report should constructively instruct authors on how they can strengthen their paper to the point where it may be acceptable for publication, or provide detailed reasons as to why the manuscript does not fulfill our criteria for consideration. Please supply appropriate evidence using examples from the manuscript to substantiate your comments. Please break your comments into two bulleted or numbered sections: major and minor comments.

Please note that we may not be able to use your review if no comments are provided.

Please only upload as attachments annotated versions of manuscripts, graphs, supporting materials or other aspects of your report which cannot be included as text in the 'Comments to Author' box.

Yes
Are the methods appropriate and well described to allow independent reproduction of experiments?
Please state in the 'Comments to Authors' box below what you think are the strengths and weaknesses of the methods (study design, data collection, and data analysis), and what is required, if anything, to improve the quality of reporting.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please explain in the 'Comments to Author' box below.

Yes

Are you able to assess the statistics?
- Are the statistical test(s) used in this study appropriate and well described?
- Is the exact sample size (n) reported for each experimental group/condition (as a number, not a range)?
- Are the description of any error bars and probability values appropriate?
- Are all error bars defined in the corresponding figure legends?
- Has a sample size calculation been included, or a description and rationale about how sample sizes were chosen?

Please can you confirm which of the following statements apply to your statistical assessment of the manuscript (Please include details of what the authors need to address in the 'Comments to Author' box):

There are statistical tests that I am unable to assess and recommend seeking additional advice (please specify which tests these are in the 'Comments to Editor' box)

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in the 'Comments to Author' box below.

Yes
Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Should the manuscript be highlighted for promotional activity?
Articles that are deemed of interest to a broad audience can be promoted in a variety of ways. This could be through email updates, postings on the BioMed Central homepage, social media, blogs and/or press releases. Please indicate in the text box below whether you think this manuscript should be considered for promotional activity, indicating your reasons why (e.g. what is the most newsworthy aspect of the research).

No

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?
If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal.