Reviewer's report

Title: Improved stove interventions to reduce household air pollution in low and middle income countries: a descriptive systematic review

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Reviewer: Stefano Petti

Reviewer's report:

This is a systematic review on the effect of modern stove use on indoor air pollution in low and middle income country. The Authors reported that well-designed interventions can have positive effect in decreasing pollutant levels, but such levels were hardly below the WHO recommended levels. Authors also reported that study participants continued to use traditional stoves, thus making result interpretation unclear.

This study is well designed, I appreciated the reviewers’ competence. Evidence-based medicine is the basis of proper health policy and good clinical practice and systematic reviews are the instrument of EBM. However, there are too many published (and submitted) systematic reviews and meta-analyses and >99% of them are methodologically flawed, incomplete and conclusions are often not supported by the results. Consequently, there are a plethora of interventions at population and individual levels which are fated to fail (and actually failed) because based on biased systematic reviews. Conversely, this is an excellent example of how these studies must be performed, exposed and how conclusions must be drawn.

Congratulations!

Stefano Petti, AE BMC Public Health/BMC Cancer

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

none to declare