Reviewer’s report

Title: Wasted research when systematic reviews fail to provide a complete and up-to-date evidence synthesis: the example of lung cancer

Version: 0 Date: 03 Nov 2015

Reviewer: Sharon Straus

Reviewer's report:

the authors have identified an interesting issue around comprehensiveness of systematic reviews. they have accurately presented their article that it is important for sys reviews to include relevant articles to fully inform clinical and policy decision making. their project then proceeds to assess whether published sys reviews included all relevant trials on a particular topic.

some questions that the authors could consider to further strengthen their review:

1. what was the rationale for the inclusion date of 2009?

2. was their lit search conducted by an information scientist? did a second librarian peer review it?

3. was a calibration exercise done before screening?

4. why were different drug administration schemes excluded?

5. did they assess the quality of the systematic reviews? this would be an important piece of the project to include

6. can they outline whether the trials that they identified would have been eligible for inclusion in the sys reviews - it is not clear whether these were excluded because they weren't eligible or if the authors of the reviews didn't identify them. they mention the lack of including grey literature was a factor but it would be useful to consider eligibility as well

7. how would the results have changed by including the various trials? would these have made a clinically important difference to the results? this is the ultimate issue and would be terrific if the authors could provide this information.

minor comments - there are a couple of typos so suggest a careful read.

suggest in the 'inclusion criteria' that the material be separated into search and eligibility criteria to make it a bit easier to read

since the authors did a sys review, did they include a prisma checklist? i couldn't find it but perhaps i missed it
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

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

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

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

Acceptable

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