Reviewer's report

Title: Common issues raised during the quality assurance process of WHO guidelines: a cross sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 14 Nov 2017

Reviewer: Joan Kraft

Reviewer's report:

This is a well written and concise paper. It is important that policy makers, health care providers and others better understand the results of the guideline development process, so that they maintain confidence in the process.

Please clarify whether and how the authors of the paper are involved in the process, and whether/to what extent their involvement may contribute to their interpretations of the results.

Please explain the justification for selecting the 2012 - 2015 time period for review? Why not start in 2007, when the Guideline Review Committees were established?

Please clarify the first and second sentences of the methods section --- did you actually include proposals and guidelines from 201-2014? And if so, how were they treated differently from proposals and guidelines submitted from 2014 - 2015?

The discussion focuses on a few key issues. Why did you not include problems with methods for the literature review in your discussion --- noted, as problems in nearly 3/4 of the non-approvals at both stages? Clearly the methods used for the review are as important as key questions and recommendations --- indeed, the methods link the two and are deserving of more attention in the discussion.

Why is it difficult to address problems with the scope/key questions (pg 9). Surely, it is important to clarify key questions early in the process.
Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

Acceptable

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