Reviewer’s report

Title: Qualitative Evidence Synthesis for Guidelines: Paper 2 Using Qualitative Evidence Synthesis Findings to Inform Evidence-to-Decision Frameworks and Recommendations

Version: 0 Date: 01 May 2019

Reviewer: Liz Shaw

Reviewer's report:

I would like to commend the authors on a highly interesting, clear and well written paper. It promises to be a valuable resource in the field.

I do have some queries around their methodology of bringing together their knowledge and expertise in this field. These are listed below. I hope the authors find these helpful.

Page 5, Line 28: Interested in the expertise of group during initial reflection stage. What does each author bring to the paper?

How did you record, bring together and analyse these reflections? Was this the formal use of the Delphi method? Did you audio-tape and conduct thematic analysis or use an alternative qualitative analysis technique/process? What was the process for identifying the three areas for focus in the synthesis of each of three papers and how were the themes/ideas/recommendations within this paper generated?

Page 5, Line 58: What amendments were made on the basis of their feedback? (Could be recorded in a supplementary table)

Page 6, Line 7: Does this list of WHO guidelines in which the authors have been involved exhaustive, or merely represent a sample? If the latter, how were these examples selected?

Page 7: How was the information in Table 2 generated?

Pages 9, Lines 32 to Page 10, Line 10. Have you considered an analysis of the content of example EtD guidelines to support the recommendations made here? This would be a useful addition.

Page 6, Line 4-24/33: I wonder if these paragraphs could be incorporated into the list of the research process described above on page 5? This broad overall step-by-step process description could then be linked to detailed specifics within results section.

Page 6, Line 27: Were all health systems from high-income countries, or across low, middle, high income countries?
Page 7, Line 15: What do you mean by "simple" searches? i.e. abbreviated search strategy, time limited e.t.c.? How extensive do these searches need to be in order for the team to decide if further syntheses are required?

Page 14, Line 35: Could this be a further rationale for analysis of the guidelines themselves to see how this has previously been done?

Page 16: Discussion section needs to acknowledge the potential limitations of the approach used by the authors within this piece of work and the possible impact of these on their recommendations.

**Level of interest**
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

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

Acceptable

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