Reviewer’s report

Title: A framework of the desirable features of guideline implementation tools (GItools): Delphi survey and assessment of GItools

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Reviewer: André Bussières

Reviewer’s report:

A framework of the desirable features of guideline implementation tools (GItools): Delphi survey and assessment of GItools. Anna R Gagliardi, Melissa C Brouwers and Onil K Bhattacharyya.

This work is relevant to the guideline community in need of a more structured approach when considering important features when developing or adapting guideline implementation tools.

The primary aim of this research was to generate a framework of desirable features of Guideline Implementation tools (GItools) to evaluate and adapt existing GItools, or develop new GItools. A secondary aim was to apply the framework to describe GItools in a sample of guidelines. Cross-sectional survey of the international guideline community (N=96) generated items representing desirable GItool features. Two-round Delphi e-survey administered among 31 guideline developers, implementers and researchers to confirmed items. The resulting 12 desirable features GItool framework was applied with a sample of GItools (N=13) accompanying guidelines (N=149) identified in the National Guideline Clearinghouse.

1. The question posed by the authors new and well defined. methods are appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work. However, titles and subtitles are somewhat confusing (please see discretionary revision).

3. The data are sound and well controlled.

4. The manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition

5. The discussion and conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported by the data

6. The title and abstract accurately convey what has been found

7. The writing acceptable.

Minor Essential Revisions

Line 7: please provide URL link if available

Line 9: ‘Additional items were generated at a meeting in May 2013 of 28 Canadian guideline developers’.
• Please provide details on where the meeting was held, for what purpose, and how these individuals were selected.

• Please specify the number of subgroups involved in the review of Gltools.

Page 9, line 15: ‘The panel (delete ‘was’) assembled comprised 30 guideline developers, implementers or researchers’. Abstract and results indicate ‘31 members’.

Page 10, line 10: Delete ‘A reminder was sent at two weeks and four weeks’ as this was already mentioned in the previous page.

Discretionary Revisions

Methods:

Titles used in the method section are unclear. Please consider interchanging subtitle for those provided in the result sections.

Page 8. Cross-sectional survey could read instead ‘Cross-sectional survey to generate and rate candidate Gltool features’

Furthermore, steps involved in the development and administration of an e-survey are somewhat unclear. Consider adding subtitles (ex. ‘Survey instrument’ and ‘Survey distribution’). Furthermore, is the URL link (section one) available for readers interest?

Page 9. Delphi survey

A ‘Delphi panel’ or ‘Delphi consensus process’ is a method used to obtain expert consensus whereas the survey instrument served to gather input at each rounds. Accordingly, the title could read instead: ‘Delphi consensus process to confirm desirable Gltool features’.


Results

Page 11, last paragraph. Examples of recommended changes to the wording are not particularly useful. Suggest deleting.

Page 13, 2nd paragraph. Several panellists commented… Please specify the number of panellist.

Discussion

Future direction for the Gltool should likely include guidance on items 10-12 (indicators to evaluate the tool development; recommended methods for pilot-testing with users and to assess impact of Gltools prospectively).

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

I am a member of the 'Guideline Implementation Research and Application Network' and that authors have acknowledged me in their manuscript along with other members. I do not feel my awareness of their work has influenced my judgment as a reviewer.

'I declare that I have no competing interests'