Dear Reviewers,

RE: The quality of clinical practice guidelines in traditional medicine in Korea: appraisal using the AGREE II instrument

On the behalf of my co-author, I would like to thank you for arranging peer-review of our manuscript and for your invitation to submit a revised version. We appreciate the effort of the reviewers, and believe that their constructive suggestions have resulted in a stronger manuscript for the Implementation Science’ readers.

Reviewer #1:

Major Compulsory Revisions

Comment 1) Although not a native speaker, I fear that in this particular case the language may lead to misunderstandings. Thus, I strongly recommend a major improvement of the language and with it restructuring of sentences and paragraphs. I pointed out a few examples in the attached pdf file with comments and highlights.

Revised> We have changed.

Comment 2) The background as well as the discussion should be revised, as the reader is a bit lost reading the introduction, missing the central theme, which may partly be due to the language problem stated above. Also the research objective should be reformulated, being more explicit and to the point (e.g. at the moment the research objective consists of two objectives: a) investigating the current state of CPGs (# what does this mean exactly? I have troubles finding this out reading through the whole text) and b) evaluating the quality to # b.2): further enhance CPG development and revision (= again, what exactly do you mean by revision?).
Comment 3) Relating to that, I missed a bit a coherent structure in arguments in the discussion. I think the discussion should be revised, on one hand bringing a clearer structure into it, on the other hand picking up aspects mentioned in the introduction that would be worthwhile to include (e.g. what about the results of the Chinese traditional medicine guidelines appraisal? This would firstly put the paper in a broader context and secondly give a frame to the text, which at the moment may be confusing to the reader missing a coherent structure).

Comment 4) I am also missing a clear conclusion section.

Comment 5) I am not a statistical expert, but having a look at the inter-rater reliability section, I am missing more information that might be worthwhile to know, such as discussing the results and giving a conclusion. Particularly, the ICC was the lowest for applicability (which was interestingly also rated as the lowest quality with 20.31 percent). However, it is not discussed, as to why the heterogeneity between the raters was so great. Listing the individual scores or discussing possible explanations may be worthwhile.

Minor Essential Revisions
Comment 1) The individual scores of the appraisers should be listed, as at the moment it is not possible to recalculate the results presented in Table 3 and 4.

Comment 2) The flow chart shows incorrect numbers, you start with 32 studies, after removal of duplications stating 35, after removal of 14 studies stating 20.

Comment 3) Literature review: English key words of search (titles) are provided. However, most databases were Korean, thus the keywords in English may not be applicable and Korean words should be available in an appendix or so.

Comment 4) I would recommend not naming the literature search a systematic review (See under Methods first paragraph).

Comment 5) The headings in the manuscript are misleading. E.g. under Methods – the headings data extraction and data analysis do not reflect the content.
underneath.
Revised> We have changed.

Comment 6) Redundancy:
a. Style: see last paragraph of the discussion (see also highlighted in the attached pdf) where all sentences begin with Although, however or therefore, which are partly unnecessary.
Revised> We have changed.

Reviewer #2:
This is a well written and clear paper with a good description of the problem, methods and the research process. This is likely to be the first attempt at exploring the current status of Clinical Practice Guidelines for Korean Medicine. I am happy that the research appears to have been carried out appropriately and that data is genuine. The quality of the manuscript is high in terms of the way it is written and how data is displayed which means that it is transparent and potentially reproducible.
I do however have the following comments

Major Compulsory Revisions
Comment 1) If, the first sentence in – Background is a direct quote it needs to be either in parentheses or in Italics with the exact reference attributed to it.
Revised> We have changed Italics.

Comment 2) I would remove any reference to ‘we’ and rephrase- e.g. in the abstract – We searched --- change to The ---- were searched i.e. write in the third person
Revised> We have all changed.

Comment 3) The inclusion/exclusion criteria is a little unclear – were CPG’s excluded if they had no evidence quoted? This is also reflected in the Results as it is not quite clear why some were excluded.
Revised> We have changed it in page 9, inclusion and exclusion criteria paragraph.

Comment 4) There are a couple of spelling mistakes - ‘ pervious’ rather than ‘ Previous’ -please carry out a Spell check
Revised> We have changed.

Minor essential revision
Comment 1) I think the history of CPG’s could be strengthened. Does this paper provide the first appraisal of CPGs? If so the Background could state this. Did CPG development begin in 2008 or were there any earlier developments of guidelines?
This paper is the first to provide the quality of CPGs for traditional medicine. The CPG development have started since 2008 and opened the Korean Medical Guideline Information Centre (KoMGi), and it is a very useful nationwide dissemination tool of CPGs for health professionals.

Comment 2) The relevance of this paper in relation to conventional medicine and the status internationally may be helpful in order to contextualize this paper for a wider international audience.

Revised> Thanks your comment.

Comment 3) The conclusion in the abstract could be strengthened particularly the last sentence which is weak.

Revised> We have added this point in page 9.

Discretionary Revisions

Comment 1) There was a Clinical Guidelines Special issue in the European Journal of Integrative medicine in 2014 and although two of the articles from this are cited –the importance of appraisal is brought out in the editorial which the authors may like to cite.

Revised> We have added in page 5, 2nd paragraph.

Thank you for your valuable comments.