Reviewer’s report

Title: Updated clinical guidelines experience major reporting limitations.

Version: 0 Date: 16 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Anna Gagliardi

Reviewer's report:

Many thanks for the opportunity to review this study that provides useful information to guideline developers, implementers and researchers to help them improve guideline updating and reporting. To enhance relevance and use of the findings, this manuscript would benefit from a more detailed Introduction. A few details could be clarified in the Methods, Results and Discussion, otherwise the manuscript is clearly written and the Tables clearly organized.

INTRODUCTION

Readers would benefit from a more elaborate description of the context and background to provide essential details to those who are not familiar with guidelines and guideline development, and not aware of CheckUp. This content will help to rationalize the purpose of this study. Authors might consider the following structure:

- paragraph #1 what are guidelines and why do they need updating
- paragraph #2 brief review of existing guideline updating processes and their pros/cons
- paragraph #3 describe previous work on CheckUp including the tool and how it is to be used and its purpose, i.e. to improve quality of the guideline as a whole or quality of the reporting of the update process?
- paragraph #4 identify the need this study addresses, the purpose of the study (to address that need) and the overall implications (value and/or application of the findings)

METHODS

- Start with a section labeled Research Design, specify the overall approach and method along with references (for example, content analysis?) and specify that ethics review and approval was not needed because data were publicly available.

- Specify why the year 2015 was chosen
- What was the sampling framework for guidelines?
- Specify what data were collected/extracted, i.e. title, country, clinical topic etc.
- Specify that guideline characteristics and CheckUp scoring were reported with summary statistics

RESULTS
- can you provide reasons for full-text exclusions (as one would for a systematic review)?

DISCUSSION
- authors invite CheckUp users to submit comments on its use - specify how they are to do so

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:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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I have collaborated with Robin Vernooij and Melissa Brouwers. I have no other conflicts of interest to declare.

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