Reviewer's report

Title: Effectiveness of Interventions to Reduce Indoor Air Pollution and/or Improve Health in Homes using Solid Fuel: Protocol for a Systematic Review

Version: 2
Date: 3 October 2014
Reviewer: William Lambert

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

The description of this protocol is very dated and suggests that the evidence search has occurred, as well as the update. Given that the protocol follows conventional standards for the conduct of a systematic literature review, and does not present innovative methods, the protocol would be better presented as the Approach (Methods) section of the completed review on effectiveness of interventions to reduce IAP and improve health in families in low and middle income countries relying on biomass fuels for cooking and heating.

Your description of the search strategy mixes past and current tenses and suggests the research work is completed.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria are not documented.

The range of considered interventions is very broad and should be focused on specific targets, e.g., alternative cooking devices to biomass burning hearths.

A rationale for the population of interest is broad and non-specific, and the systematic review does not include plans for subgroup analysis of populations we know to be at risk, particularly women and children.

The analytic plan for management of a diverse range of comparators is not described.

The analytic plan for outcomes is not described. Among the indoor air pollution outcomes it might be assumed that you will consider carbon monoxide (CO), respirable particulate matter (PM2.5), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), but these are not explicitly described in the current protocol. Similarly, the health outcomes are not explicitly provided but are assumed to be mortality, respiratory infections, and pulmonary function parameters.

The Discussion statement "Our pilot search indicates that our search strategy is adequate sensitive to identify relevant studies" is not supported by data. Please provide information to support this conclusion.

Minor Essential Revisions

In the Abstract, your focus on interventions in lower and middle income countries
needs to be stated in the Background or Objectives, as opposed to first appearing in the Discussion.

The first sentence of the Types of Study section is not a complete sentence.

Discretionary Revisions

None

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare I have no competing interests.