Reviewer's report

Title: User-involvement in a Cochrane systematic review: using structured methods to enhance the clinical relevance, usefulness and usability of a systematic review update.

Version: 1
Date: 4 December 2014
Reviewer: Jonathan Boote

Reviewer's report:

The paper presents an interesting case study account of user involvement in a systematic review. There are very few published examples of user involvement in systematic reviews for reviewers to draw on, and, to my knowledge, a detailed case study of user involvement in a Cochrane review has not yet been published. This paper therefore will be a useful addition to the literature. The paper is interesting to read and is well written, with good use of tables and figures.

I would suggest that the paper can be further improved by the authors making the following minor essential and discretionary revisions.

Minor essential revisions:

1. Reference is made in the end notes to Boote et al's (2002) paper on consumer involvement in health research, published in Health Policy. However, this paper does not appear in the list of references.

2. line 73, the authors state that the Delphi process can be used within meetings. This is incorrect, as the Delphi process is a form of consensus development where participants do not meet face to face. This sentence needs revising. I would suggest that the authors delete 'within group meetings' and replace this with, 'at key stages of the review process'.

3. line 244, I think 'presently' should read 'presented'.

Discretionary revisions

1. In the introductory paragraph, the authors talk about 'user-involvement' (not sure about the consistent use of a hyphen throughout the paper between user and involvement...) and also that of 'consumer involvement'. I am aware that the Cochrane Collaboration has consistently used the term 'consumer involvement', so I wonder if the authors need to address the issue of terminology early in the paper, even if this is done using an end-note. The authors may wish to set out why they are using the term 'user involvement' instead of 'consumer involvement' (and also instead of 'public involvement', which is currently employed by UK health research funders such as the NIHR.

2. The sentence across lines 227-230 is quite long, and difficult to follow, so I wonder if it could be split into 2 smaller sentences?
3. I would have liked a bit more detail about stakeholders' concerns about a lack of 'representativeness' within the stakeholder panel. This is an important issue in the PPI literature and merits further consideration. In what way did stakeholders think the panel unrepresentative? Was this just an issue for the professional members, or the lay members, or both? This issue could perhaps also be reflected upon in the discussion section of the paper, drawing on the extant PPI literature.

**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 declare that I have no competing interests