Reviewer's report

Title: Time to rethink the systematic review catechism? Moving from "what works" to "what happens"

Version: 2 Date: 21 January 2015

Reviewer: Mark Pearson

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the revised manuscript. The author's response provides a clear rationale for certain points not being addressed in this paper, and the revised manuscript addresses the points raised. In my view the manuscript will provide an important contribution to moving the field of systematic reviews forward.

There are two minor points the author may wish to consider for the final version:

1. Ref 10 (RAMESES publication standards) - the protocol rather than the final standards have been cited. This is the final publication: WONG, G., GREENHALGH, T., WESTHORP, G., BUCKINGHAM, J. & PAWSON, R. 2013. RAMESES publication standards: realist syntheses. BMC Med, 11, 21.

2. The abstract would benefit from mentioning the methodological research agenda (as summarised in the conclusion)

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests