Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Effect of Standardized Training on the Reliability of the Cochrane Risk of Bias Assessment Tool: a prospective study

**Version:** 0 **Date:** 06 Sep 2016

**Reviewer:** Matthew Page

**Reviewer's report:**

The authors have conducted an interesting, valuable randomized trial that was designed to improve the inter-rater reliability of assessments using the Cochrane risk of bias tool. The manuscript is very well written and the authors used several methods to minimise bias in their findings. The authors have also done an excellent job in acknowledging the limitations of the research. I only have a few minor suggestions.

Page 5: Can you please describe what "feasibility issues" you are referring to in the statement, "…we did not assess selective outcome reporting in our study due to feasibility issues with the assessment". This seems like a missed opportunity, since inter-rater reliability tends to be low for this domain in the Cochrane risk of bias tool, and so it would have been interesting to know if standardized training can improve this.

Page 6-7. Was the exploration of whether reporting quality and sample size influences agreement pre-specified? If not, this post hoc analysis should be declared as such.

Page 7: In the first paragraph of the Results, I assume that the risk of bias judgements that are summarised are based on the consensus ratings of the experienced raters, but this is not clear. Can you please clarify in the manuscript?

Page 7-8: It is stated that "There was evidence for an interaction between differences in Kappa values and period of publication before or after publication of the CONSORT 2010 statement for the assessment of incomplete outcome data (p=0.002), but not for any other risk of bias items (p≥0.07, Appendix Figure 2)". Can you please describe in the manuscript which group had higher kappa values (the pre- or post-CONSORT 2010 group?)

Page 12: In the Conclusion, it is stated that reviewers should consider using the intensive, standardized training that was applied in this study, by adapting it to their specific area of research. However, I could not see any link to the training materials provided in the manuscript or in an additional file. Are these materials available for widespread use, and if so, how can review authors access them?

**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:

Acceptable

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If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I am a member of the core group revising the Cochrane risk of bias tool for randomized trials.

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