Reviewer’s report

Title: Systematic review adherence to methodological or reporting quality

Version: 0 Date: 13 Dec 2016

Reviewer: Anne-Marie Glenny

Reviewer’s report:

Many thanks for the opportunity to review this article. There are some items that would benefit from rewording/clarification. My main comment would be in regard to the assessment of the methodological quality of SRs using OQAQ (see comments relating to page 12, line 31 below).

Abstract: The last sentence "Methods of … can improve the quality of SRs" is not supported by the findings of this study, therefore its inappropriate as a conclusion of the study.

Page 6, last sentence of the introduction presents the objective of the study. Immediately under this is the heading 'Objectives' which includes a slightly different objective.

Page 7, line 35 "is should be" typo

Page 7, line 51. It's unclear what is covered by 'other quality characteristics'.

Page 8, line 1 and line 2. Minor issue but it would be preferable if the order of the tools presented in the brackets followed the order of "MQ and RQ"

Page 10, Report characteristics. The number of reports, presented by their primary intent and the tools used to assess MQ/RQ, could be made clearer. For example, it would appear that 52 reports assess MQ (34 with primary intent to assess MQ alone and 18 having primary intent to assess both MQ and RQ). However, on line 52 it states that 27 reports used AMSTAR and 26 reports used OQAQ (i.e 53 reports assessing MQ - did one report use both tools?).

Similarly, 4 reports had primary intent to assess RQ and 18 to assess both RQ and MQ, yet on line 54 it states 13 used PRISMA and 7 used QUOROM, making a total of 20 reports assessing RQ. Perhaps I'm miss reading this. In addition, in table 1 it would appear that one report, with the primary intent to assess RQ, used OQAQ - I don't think this isn't apparent from the text.

Page 11, line 34, should it be Tables 2-5 (rather than Tables 2-4)?

Page 11, line 54, "Compliance was poor for several items; however, with…” could be reworded to "However, compliance was poor for the following items:……"

Page 12, line 7. Suggest changing second sentence to "One additional report did not provide…”

Page 12, line 22 "quality too" typo
Page 12, line 31. This section discusses adherence to methodological quality, defined on page 7 as how well a SR is designed and conducted. I have not previously used the OQAQ, but, looking at the items as presented in Table 5, it would appear that some of these items are more linked to reporting rather than the quality of the design/conduct of the SR. For example, 'Were the search methods used to find evidence reported', 'Were methods used to combine the findings of relevant studies reported?'. Perhaps the full tool clarifies that these items are truly assessing the design/conduct of the SR, rather than the reporting? If not, then I think this needs further consideration.

Table 2, page 25, line 28 and line 31. Its not helpful to have "(see item 15)" and "(see item 16)" - do these refer to the original tools?

Table 4, item assessed 'Funding'. The description for this item is 'Was conflict of interest stated?'. Conflict of interest isn't just limited to funding - I'm not sure the item/description appropriately reflect the wording in the AMSTAR tool.

It would interesting to have a fuller discussion of the discrepancies between the results from PRISMA and QUOROM for items that appear to be measuring the same thing.

Page 13, line 21. The authors note that compliance to some reporting criteria has improved over time. This would interesting to explore further

It might be worth discussing/mentioning the ROBIS tool (DOI: 10.1016/j.jclinepi.2015.06.005)

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