Reviewer’s report

Title: Recommendations for Reporting of Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses of Diagnostic Test Accuracy: A Systematic Review

Version: 0 Date: 27 Aug 2017

Reviewer: Matthew Page

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have conducted an interesting and valuable exploration of potential items to include in the PRISMA extension for systematic reviews of diagnostic test accuracy. The methods are rigorous and appropriate, although some could be explained in more detail. I have indicated how so below:

"Methods - Database search": It is worth mentioning to readers that the Cochrane Methodology Register does not include any records published after July 2012 (see http://cmr.cochrane.org/).

"Methods - Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria, Study Selection, and Data Extraction": It was a little unclear to me how the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Diagnostic Test Accuracy was used to generate potential items for PRISMA-DTA. That is, was the whole handbook read (cover-to-cover) by two authors independently? Also, the Handbook is incomplete currently, so it is worth mentioning this.

"Methods - Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria, Study Selection, and Data Extraction": Are there any guidance documents that were excluded from the review? For example, the AHRQ Methods Guide for Comparative Effectiveness Research, the Institute of Medicine's 2011 Standards for Systematic Reviews, and the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination guidance, are not listed as sources. It would be good to explain why these were excluded.

"Methods - Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria, Study Selection, and Data Extraction": The MECIR Standards were updated in July 2016 (see http://community.cochrane.org/mecir-manual). Suggest that you specify that the 2013 version was consulted for your review.

"Methods - Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria, Study Selection, and Data Extraction": The methods used to generate a list of potentially relevant items are somewhat unclear. Were items in existing reporting guidelines extracted verbatim? Were items then revised so that they are more applicable to systematic reviews of DTA? How were items generated from the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Diagnostic Test Accuracy (given this is a handbook, not a structured list of items)? How were items from tools for assessing risk of bias or quality in systematic reviews generated (e.g. AMSTAR, ROBIS), given these include a list of questions for users of systematic reviews to answer. And how to items in reporting guidelines for primary DTA studies handled (e.g. STARD 2015, STARD for Abstracts)?
"Results - Identification of Potentially Relevant Items": Some more detail on how items were divided into categories could be provided. For example, was categorisation done by one or two authors? Were categories pre-specified? Are categories aligned with the existing PRISMA Statement?

"Results - Identification of Potentially Relevant Items": The paragraph starting, "Items were taken from 19 unique sources…", is a little confusing. By this I assume you mean that these 19 sources are different to the 203 articles identified from the search of bibliographic databases? If so, then what was obtained from the 203 articles? Also, were the "eight research articles [6, 17, 34-39], two reviews [2, 40], two DTA statistical methodology overviews [41, 42], and one conference abstract [43]" identified from the search of bibliographic databases (that is, included in the list of 203 articles)?

"Discussion": The discussion could be extended. Currently there is little comparison with existing research or similar studies of this nature, and not much consideration of the implications of the research.

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