Reviewer’s report

Title: Prevalence and pattern of co-occurring musculoskeletal pain and its association with back-related disability among people with persistent low back pain: protocol for a systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 0 Date: 04 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Ryckie Wade

Reviewer’s report:

Dear Professor Overaas and colleagues,

Thank you for the opportunity to review your work. This is a beautifully written and comprehensive protocol which I recommend for publication.

Admittedly, I am not familiar with reviews of epidemiological data (having only conducted reviews of interventions and test accuracy myself) so I cannot comment on the plan for presentation or synthesis of such data, but the content otherwise appears complete, and the team and resources aligned to complete the work. The search strategy appears valid (perhaps you could publish this string in it's own right, for other authors to use in similar works?). The methods for identification, extraction and synthesis are sound.

Three small suggestions/questions:

1. p9, line 9 - remove comma before and

2. p9, line 17 - "10% of THE total YLDs", add the

3. Will you provide a GRADE assessment of the evidence as well as the risk of bias assessments? I wasn't quite clear on this part of the protocol or if this is typically done for such reviews (although I can't see why not). Normally both are presented... perhaps this could be clarified, please?

Has this work been offered to the Cochrane Collaboration? I'm sure they would be interested in work of this calibre...

Best of luck,

Ryckie G. Wade

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