Reviewer’s report

Title: Guideline-based quality indicators - a systematic comparison of German and international clinical practice guidelines: protocol for a systematic review

Version: 0 Date: 04 Oct 2017

Reviewer: Mihiretu Kebede

Reviewer's report:

This is a systematic review protocol aiming to compare 35 topic-related S3-CPG with international CPGs QIs.

I suggest the writing can be improved. I sometimes struggled to understand some of the sentences in the manuscript. Eg line 134-139, line 148-150 are not clear. Please rephrase them to avoid long and confusing sentences.

The main research question was developed based on the "35 previously identified topic-related S3-CPG". However, there is a little description of these previously identified German S3-CPGs in the protocol. A description of it is included in the supplementary material. I think it is also important to explain it in the main document.

The quality indicators are also not clear, give examples. Do you mean quality indicators for all the 35 S3-CPG?

In the inclusion criteria, there are some terms which need clear definitions. Eg: validity is not exceeded.

Why is the WHO stratum 2003 used? NB: in 2003, WHO had 182 member states while currently WHO has 194 member states.

First, the authors wrote in the exclusion criteria, "If QIs are solely reported in a separate document, which is not a supplement to the CPG (e.g. evidence or methodological report), there has to be an explicit link with the particular CPG. Otherwise, we will assume that these QIs are not guideline-based, and we will exclude the guideline". Then later in the search strategy line 182-183, they wrote: "In cases where topical eligible CPGs comprise neither QIs nor links to QIs, we will search the websites of the particular CPG providers for separate documents with regard to QIs". These statements are conflicting each other.
Data management and selection process

One reviewer will conduct the screening of the titles of records, again the same one reviewer will conduct the full-text screening. Then, it will be checked by another reviewer. The second reviewer will do check only the full-texts which are included. He/she will not check what is excluded. I suggest two reviewers perform the title and full-text screening if better quality results are to be obtained.

Data extraction should also include items on whether the guideline is evidence-based.

Quality assessment: The authors mentioned they will use DELBI to assess the methodological rigor of CPG and they will calculate and aggregated domain score by summing up all the individual grades. In systematic reviews, quality is often assessed in qualitative terms. Because of this, it is strongly discouraged to use quantitative scores to rate the quality of studies.

Line 231-232 Q. Are any of the authors CPG developers? If so, that should be declared in the competing interests

A little more description of the qualitative syntheses would improve the protocol.

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published
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