Author’s response to reviews

Title: Cholera diagnosis in human stool and detection in water: protocol for a systematic review of available technologies

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Author’s response to reviews:

Re: SYSR-D-17-00068R1

Dear Rakesh and Systematic Reviews Editorial Team,

Thank you for the opportunity to further revise the manuscript “Cholera diagnosis in human stool and detection in water: protocol for a systematic review of available technologies”.

We thank the reviewers for the time devoted to this manuscript, especially for their continued constructive feedback.

Please see reviewer replies below. They have additionally been uploaded to the online system.

I would like to flag one change which is not in response to reviewer comments, however much improves the manuscript and quality of work proposed: we have recently added a new member to the review team and are thus able to double-screen titles/abstracts for inclusion. This has been
reflected in the methods alongside edits requested already by reviewers. We hope this will not count as an inconvenience.

Best wishes,

The Author Team

Revision points raised – Reviewer 2

1. Avoid repetition of information, e.g. in the abstract objective of the review is stated four times (two in the first paragraph of methods and again in the first sentence "...databases will be searched to identify..."), and again in methods and the discussion.

Reply: We appreciate the comment and have edited the text of the manuscript to avoid repetition; see the abstract and introduction sections and noted edits below.

2. Research questions and research objectives are very similar, suggest to include questions in annex and not in the text, as it is repetitive.

Reply: We agree and have moved the research questions to a text box. (Box 1)

3. Information in page 4, line 50 to page 5 line 17, is unclear to me.

Reply: We have deleted this section and have moved relevant information to the section reporting on scoping. (See point 5)
4. I suggest justification of the review should be included in the discussion, and not in the introduction (page 5, line 20-52).

Reply: These sentence have been deleted as repetitive.

5. Methods should state scoping searches were performed and how. Results of the scope search should be presented in a more nuanced way.

Reply: Please see Page 10: methods for scoping searches are reported and we provide a critical description of the primary review the systematic review hopes to build on.

6. Suggest to include EMBASE in the electronic databases.

Reply: This has been added to the list of databases to be searched. (Page 7) We have additionally included IndMed and grey literature searches to further strengthen this section.

7. Thanks for including an explanation about the setting of studies, please also include how studies will be analyzed according to the setting, type of tests, population, etc. Right now there's only information about meta-analysis/non meta-analysis/qualitative meta-summary.

Reply: Please note the section on Data synthesis includes a section on narrative synthesis: we have expanded this in line with the requested clarifications. We have additionally strengthened the section on meta-analyses.

8. GRADE approach is to assess quality of evidence, not for risk of bias. Please differentiate both approaches.

Reply: We agree and have renamed the section previously titled “Assessment of risk of bias” to “Assessment of risk of bias and quality of evidence”. Both QUADAS2 and GRADE are noted in this section as appropriate.
9. Minor comments: Please check for language correction in this sentence: We will include studies from all global settings, provided index test performance is evaluated, and reported on, against a specified comparator.

Reply: We have edited this sentence.