Author’s response to reviews

Title: Measurement properties of instruments to assess pain in children and adolescents with cancer: A systematic review protocol

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Version: 2 Date: 29 Dec 2017

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NB. See also attached cover letter.

First, we would to thank the editors for arranging the peer review process.
REVIEWERS COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Reviewers

REVIEWER 2

Comment R2.1
Thank you for your thoughtful responses to my comments, and the subsequent edits to the manuscript. I have no further comments to make. Good luck with your research.

Response R2.1
We thank reviewer 2 for her kind words and wish her good luck with her research as well.

REVIEWER 3

Comment R3.1
Thank you for your courteous attention to comments. It seems adequate revisions have been made to the manuscript to address most points. I still have one query with regards to comment R3.6 in which I questioned the statement regarding citations being included if included by at least one reviewer as erroneous. The authors' response was to clarify that any citation included by either reviewer will be included without any discussion, even if one reviewer excluded it.

From a reviewer point of view, this seems problematic because there will always be studies that need to be looked at more closely and subsequently excluded. If you include everything and never question it's inclusion/eligibility not only will you end with some irrelevant or useless studies but none of the reviewers will learn anything from the process of screening/study selection which I think was the entire point of have 7 team members divide the task of double screening between them? But if this is a process which takes place without any reflection or reflexivity I would question the value of this conservative approach. If reviewers are working independently, without consensus, it will be inconsistent and unlikely to benefit from double screening.
Response R3.2

We thank reviewer 3 for her kind words and helpful comments. With regard to the one remaining query, we acknowledge that our answer to comment R3.6 in the previous review round might not have been clear enough. The stated method, i.e. “any citation included by either reviewer will be included without any discussion”, is only applicable to the title selection phase. During abstract selection, and subsequently also during full-text selection, all discrepancies (e.g. one include, one exclude) will be discussed in detail and decisions will be taken by consensus. Therefore, the process still benefits from the advantages of double screening. To make this clearer in the manuscript we added the following (lines 212-214): “It should be noted that this conservative approach is only applied during the title selection phase, during abstract and full-text selection all discrepancies will be discussed in detail and resolved by consensus.”. Thank you.