Reviewer’s report

Title: Reporting of Financial Conflicts of Interest in Meta-Analyses of Drug Trials Published in High-Impact Medical Journals: Comparison of Results from 2017-2018 and 2009

Version: 0 Date: 29 Nov 2019

Reviewer: Jelena Savovic

Reviewer's report:

This study assess the completeness of reporting of financial conflicts of interest (FCOI) and sources of funding in a sample of systematic reviews published in the most influential general and specialist medical journals in a 2-year period 2017-2018. This provides a current descriptive snapshot of reporting and how it differs between different journal categories. The study applied the same (or very similar) sampling strategy from their previous study to enable them to also compare reporting of FCOI since their last study. The sample focuses on SRs of patented drugs (where influence of financial interests may be expected to be of more importance).

The authors acknowledge that the sample they selected may not be generalisable to other medical areas or lower impact journals. It is not just about generalisability - the sample is small, perhaps insufficient to infer that the reporting standards have indeed improved or not, even for the type of journals in question. It may be worth briefly mentioning other limitations of this study design (comparing 2 samples over time).

The authors comment that Cochrane now require reviews to include financial FCOI for all included studies and for the review team. I think the study would benefit from adding information on any such policy from all of the sampled journals. For example whether there is an editorial requirement to include FCOI details, or a requirement to adhere to PRISMA, and whether this is different to how it was at the time of the previous study in 2009. There appears to be some improvement in reporting, especially in general medical journals - some discussion of why this may be or may not be of interest (even if it would be speculative). Do they think the adoption of PRISMA may be one of the reasons for improvement?

Can the authors offer a recommendation for how to get more review authors to report FCOI in the future? Will the proposed changes to the PRISMA statement be sufficient to achieve this?

The paper is well written, even if the results section is a bit tedious to read as long list of proportions. The figure helps. Perhaps not all of it needs to be reported in the text as tables are pretty detailed. This is a minor issue (optional).
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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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