Reviewer’s report

Title: Impact of peer review on discussion of study limitations and strength of claims in randomised trial reports: a before and after study

Version: 0 Date: 09 Jun 2019

Reviewer: Melissa Raven

Reviewer's report:

This is a useful study.

My main criticism is that there is no mention of the qualitative analyses of five manuscript-publication pairs until the Discussion (page 6). It should be briefly explained earlier.

Regarding the sensitivity analysis excluding BMJ Open and BMC Medicine articles (pages 4-5), I would have liked the number of editorial team members in the non-excluded journals to be stated there.

Regarding the limitations of the study, not only did it only include open peer review journals (as acknowledged, page 7), but also the journals included (BMJ Open and BMC Medicine) are arguably of a higher than average calibre, and I think it would be good to acknowledge this.

I am puzzled by the statement that 'Blind peer review may lead to different results, but is uncommon in biomedical journals' (page 7). I don't know the statistics on open peer review, but my perception is that most journals still have blind peer review (unfortunately).

I would have liked some comment on whether/how the results of the study could potentially be used in practice by academic writers, reviewers, and editors.

For consistency, one term should be used instead of 'editorial team' and 'editorial committee' (page 5) and 'editorial board' (pages 4 and several pages later).

Formatting-wise, several paragraphs are too long, particularly on pages 3, 4-5, and 7. Shorter paragraphs (with logical breaks) are beneficial for readers.
**Level of interest**
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

**Declaration of competing interests**
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal