Reviewer’s report

Title: CHALLENGES OF RAPID REVIEWS FOR DIAGNOSTIC TEST ACCURACY QUESTIONS: A PROTOCOL FOR AN INTERNATIONAL SURVEY AND EXPERT CONSULTATION

Version: 0 Date: 27 Dec 2018

Reviewer: Johannes Reitsma

Reviewer’s report:

1. Working definition of a "rapid review"

The term rapid review can mean different things to different people. In order to avoid confusion and unnecessary variation in responses from different researches is good to have a starting (working) definition or to systematically discuss the various elements that could be different in a rapid review. Stating the working definition of a rapid review from the authors and/or listing the elements that can be different is needed.

2. Current duration of diagnostic accuracy reviews

It would have been interesting if the authors could provide some data about typical durations of current diagnostic accuracy reviews. In particular, the Cochrane Diagnostic editorial teams may have some data about time to protocol to time to publication for Cochrane diagnostic accuracy review (head Jon Deeks)

3. Diagnostic test definition in Abstract line 55, 56

These lines read a bit difficult and are also a bit confusing by highlighting that diagnostic tests are intended "... to further clarify the character and prognosis of patients". The word prognosis may confuse readers. Diagnosis is about finding out which condition is responsible for the patient's complaints or to detect whether a certain condition is present or absent (including whether a patient has a specific stage of a certain condition). So the interest is cross-sectional in nature in diagnosis, although we may need follow-up to find out what was going on at the moment of testing. Please rephrase to avoid confusion.

4. Diagnostic accuracy studies

Diagnostic studies covers a broad range of different questions and study designs. Diagnostic accuracy studies are an important subgroup of diagnostic studies. Please provide a key definition what a diagnostic accuracy study is and why they are important. Not all readers know exactly what accuracy studies are. Mention single test and comparative diagnostic accuracy studies. In
particular highlight whether multivariable diagnostic models and added value studies are also considered as "diagnostic accuracy studies" or whether they are excluded from this study.

5. Summarize main findings and challenges form earlier projects on rapid reviews

Several scoping type of projects and reviews have been done in the field of intervention rapid reviews. A short summary (box perhaps) of the main issues and challenges in rapid reviews of intervention studies would be helpful and interesting to the reader.

6. More information on questions in the semi-structured interviews

To give the reader a better understanding what will be discussed in these interviews, it would be helpful to provide some more information on key questions in the interview. It also provide the opportunity for readers to give more informative feedback to the authors. Would that be possible?

7. Limitations of aggregate data reviews of diagnostic accuracy

There are several limitations in diagnostic review studies based on aggregate data like investigating variation in diagnostic accuracy among patient level subgroups, variation in the actual value of markers between studies (non-standardized measurements and protocols), variation in the use of cut-off values between studies. Rapid reviews based on aggregate data will suffer from these same limitations. Please add that for certain questions and circumstances even rapid reviews will be a waste of time, and individual patient data reviews will be the best way forward.

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

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

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

Needs some language corrections before being published

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In the past I have published multiple papers with one of the co-authors (prof Bossuyt)

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