Reviewer’s report

Title: Use of Test Accuracy Study Design Labels in NICE’s Diagnostic Guidance

Version: 0 Date: 21 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Danielle van der Windt

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript describes an analysis of 17 documents (NICE Diagnostic Guidance and evidence reports in a range of topic areas), aiming to describe the range of study design terms and labels used to distinguish study designs. The paper gives a list of the design terms used, classifies these into 4 categories (from specific for DTA studies to unclear), provides an interpretation of design terms and features of study designs, and indicates to what extent labels have been used to differentiate between (or weigh) study design features.

The manuscript raises a very important point, namely that there is inconsistency in the terms used to describe study design and study design features in the analysed reports, and that similar terms have been interpreted in very different ways. Although the paper has clearly highlighted and illustrated the lack of consistency in terminology by analysing NICE Diagnostic Guidance and evidence reports, it does not yet offer a way forward. The authors might already have considered how to develop a framework (or nomenclature) for improving terminology related to DTA study design, and it would be highly valuable to incorporate this in the manuscript, and take it beyond establishing the problem only.

Level of interest
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An article of limited interest

Quality of written English
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Acceptable

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