

## **Reviewer's report**

**Title:** Overview of a Formal Scoping Review on Health System Report Cards

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 20 September 2008

**Reviewer:** France Legare

### **Reviewer's report:**

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?

Yes: to report on the extent of the literature on health system quality reporting.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?

The methods appear to be adequate but the reporting of methods is difficult to follow. The section "Scoping reviews" should be removed from the methods section and in fact, from the manuscript.

The section "Development of research question" is potentially interesting but underdeveloped. The section "Stakeholder consultation" belongs to the section "Development of the research question." It appears that interesting results from this methodological approach were not reported; e.g. What were the suggestions of stakeholders?

The section "Study selection" lacks clear presentation of inclusion and exclusion criteria pertaining to the content of the eligible papers. The authors provided a list of inclusion criteria pertaining to the type of publications that was deemed eligible. However, it is not clear how the authors defined and operationalised the inclusion criteria for health system report card and/or health system quality reporting.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?

The results section could be improved by:

a) removing first paragraph;

b) presenting the characteristics of papers and studies ("other results") before presenting the scoping review results;

c) providing references for each one of the results; e.g. "In contrast, other studies demonstrated either little or no impact of report cards on health care quality." (add references and state clearly how many)

d) restraining from using words such as: "some", "other studies", "several", "approximately 60%". Please provide exact count of how many studies reported on the results that are being highlighted.

e) Table 1. is informative and should be a model for reporting other results

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?

Somewhat; i made comments above on how it could be improved; the abstract needs to be modified to better reflect the methods used and the results from the scoping review.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

Move the whole argument for performing scoping review in the discussion section.

The limitations section is interesting but the authors seems to contradict themselves ; they state that they are not sure about how useful their results will be to stakeholders; it would be good for them to provide ideas on how the results of their scoping review will be useful.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

Somewhat

7. Is the writing acceptable?

See above comments

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'