

Reviewer's report

Title: Are there valid proxy measures of clinical behaviour? Systematic review

Version: 1 **Date:** 26 February 2009

Reviewer: Sally Green

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this excellent paper which makes an excellent contribution to Implementation Science, both through its scientific content and in providing practical and helpful information to guide the methods of much future research. I am sure I will cite it frequently.

All my suggestions fall in the category of Discretionary Revisions.

1. There is detailed description of the Quality Assessment Criteria used, and how they were applied, but no detailing of how or why these criteria were selected, nor the reliability of scores between reviewers. I can imagine these criteria being very helpful in other reviews of methods of measurement, and it would be useful to consider further reporting to allow this.

2. There is no mention in the review of the potential for publication bias. While the potential limitation of the search and retrieval based on inconsistent terminology is noted, there is no discussion as to whether publication bias was considered. The included studies presented various results, and so there does not appear, on the face of it, that there is systematic tendency in the literature to report only those studies demonstrating 'positive' results (or good performance of measures), but it may be a useful discussion point to mention this assessment, particularly in light of the AMSTAR criteria for systematic review appraisal.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no financial competing interests. Non financial competing interests: I have joint grants and publications with two of the authors of this paper, in unrelated content areas.