Reviewer’s report

Title: Gabapentin and postoperative pain; A qualitative and quantitative systematic review, with focus on procedure.

Version: 2 Date: 19 March 2007

Reviewer: Henry McQuay

Reviewer’s report:

General

This review is a professional systematic review of perioperative gabapentin for postoperative pain. This must be the ninth review of the trials; it feels as though there are nearly as many reviews as there are trials. The novel twist here is to analyse by procedure.

From the point of view of systematic review I have no major or minor criticisms of the manuscript.

From the point of view of perioperative gabapentin I have to declare a bias. I am much less convinced than the authors. Two reasons will suffice for now, but I think both merit space in the revised Discussion. The first is that the primary outcome measure is PCA opioid consumption, with simultaneous VASPI or equivalent. The assumption is that patients in the active and control treatment groups will titrate ‘down’ to the same low VASPI, and the difference in opioid consumption at the SAME VASPI gives us the valid difference in opioid consumption.

This simply doesn’t happen in all except 3 of these trials. From my hypercritical standpoint the rest of the trials are invalid and should not be included in the analysis.

The second complaint is the absence of mention of dose-response. My scepticism about this intervention flourishes when I can’t see the expected biological phenomena of less effect at lower dose and bigger effect at bigger dose.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

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