Reviewer’s report

Title: Meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials on the efficacy of thoracic epidural anesthesia in preventing atrial fibrillation after coronary artery bypass grafting

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Reviewer: Alistair Royse

Reviewer’s report:

This paper is nicely written and examines an important subject. Advanced statistical analysis has been performed and a statistician should review these prior to publication for the Journal.

However, there are a number of points that require explanation or revision:

MAJOR

They indicate that papers with a Jadad score of 2 or less were excluded; yet the median score of papers included was 3 (range 2-4). Surely this cannot be if papers with a score of 2 were excluded. If a paper was included with a score of 2 then this would need justification.

In the papers excluded due to the lack of clarity of a definition of POAF, further explanation or details are required, as these do seem to be otherwise quality studies and thus could influence the final analysis of the study were they to be included. Was this a major flaw or a minor flaw?

Also it is well known in CABG that there are large racial differences as well as age differences in the incidence of POAF. Clearly the studies have a Western and older age bias; yet this has not been discussed at all and needs to be considered at least in the discussion.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have not competing interests