Reviewer's report

Title: Definitions and methods of measuring and reporting on injurious falls in randomised controlled fall prevention trials: a systematic review

Version: 1 Date: 14 February 2012

Reviewer: Catherine Sherrington

Reviewer's report:

General comments

This is a very useful review which makes an important contribution to the field and is likely to be a highly cited paper. The manuscript is clearly written.

Discretionary Revisions

It is also likely that the population/setting of the study would influence the rate of injurious falls and the proportion of falls that are injurious. This could be acknowledged in the discussion of variability in included studies.

I suggest a reordering of the manuscript so that the results/tables regarding the methods of collecting data on injurious falls appears prior to the section on the proportion of falls that are injurious.

In the limitations section the statement that the present review includes most relevant high-quality studies could be modified as the use of the word “most” implies that the authors are aware of missing studies and “high quality” is potentially misleading as RCTs are of differing methodological quality and this has not been assessed in the current review.

I suggest that a further recommendation could be that all falls trials should report injurious falls even if they are not powered to detect effects on this outcome. This data can be used in future meta-analyses. I think there is probably outcome reporting bias in the current literature as authors may be tempted to only report on injurious falls if the results are in the “correct” direction. I think this is evident in the latest Cochrane review of fall prevention interventions in the community as the pooled estimate of the impact of exercise on fractures is much larger than the pooled estimate of the impact of exercise on falls.

I noticed a typographic error in the abstract “the aim or this study”.

Level of interest: An article of importance 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 declare that I have no competing interests