Reviewer's report

**Title:** Disagreement in primary study selection between systematic reviews on negative pressure wound therapy

**Version:** 4  **Date:** 5 June 2008

**Reviewer:** Erik von Elm

**Reviewer's report:**

**General comment:**
I went through the revised manuscript again. The authors have done a great job and incorporated all the suggestions and the additional information they gathered. I have no major points for further revision.

**Minor essential revisions:**
1. Abstract Methods and throughout text incl. figures: The present analysis is repeatedly labeled as “additional analysis”. I think it is sufficient to explain the relation to the preceding review on NPWT once but to use less ambiguous wording afterwards, e.g. “the present analysis”.
2. p7 para 3; p9 para 2; p11: “reporting style”: Not sure if this is an appropriate term for what you describe subsequently. The differences between reviews are apparently not due to “style” but definition of inclusion criteria.
3. p9: The first paragraph could be improved. It should not repeat study objectives but summarize results “in a nutshell”.
4. p9 para 4 “The differing susceptibility of RCTs…” This sentence has been revised. I still think that the line of argument is difficult to follow. Maybe this could be simplified?
5. p10, 1st sentence “…due to historical, structural and cultural obstacles,…” This is very vague. Either explain in more detail or drop it.
6. p10 para 4 “inter-author classifications” Since most reviews have multiple authors, this could be misleading. Replace by sth. like “variations between reviews” if this is meant.

**Discretionary revisions:**
7. Some sentences are overly long, e.g. 2nd sentence of Background. For this, I suggest a careful check of the whole manuscript. Splitting some sentences in two may further improve the readability of this text.
8. p10 para 4 following sentence: Did you check with the respondent whether he agrees with the direct quote of his communication? Otherwise the content could be paraphrased.
9. p11, line 1, reference 50: The reference to the 1996 version of CONSORT is correct. But it might be better to guide readers (and potential CONSORT users)
to the revised version published in 2001.

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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.