Reviewer's report

Title: Does clinical examination aid in the diagnosis of urinary tract infections in women? A systematic review

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Reviewer: Ellen Stobberingh

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The authors performed a systematic review regarding the predictive values (PPV/NPV) of UTI in women. They concluded that only nitrite or leuco had a high PPV, but no specific clinical sign.

Major comments:

- the articles selected for the analysis included all papers dealing with female patients presenting with symptoms of a UTI to their GP. No differentiation was made between complicated/uncomplicated, pre- versus postmenopausal, low or high UTI. What was the reason not to make a distinction. Is it to be expected that the results will be different when the different groups will be analysed separately. Please comment.

- The articles were selected based on a previously defined selection protocol: i) the protocol was unfortunately not provided; ii) for the selection of the articles a stepwise approach was followed. Step 5 included the judgement of an external expert whereas on the other hand articles were excluded when there was no agreement of 2 or more reviewers. Could you explain what the role of the external expert is, and do I understand it correctly that if one reviewer agreed, the article will be included?

Results:

In the last paragraph of the results the authors mentioned that data could not be analysed as only 2 studies assessed these variables. As these variables are relevant clinical findings, what is the effect of omitting them from the analysis? Are the results obtained then still valid?

Minor comments:

Inclusion criteria:

Please explain: i) "agar plate culture method" or give a reference, ii) how long is a "sufficient" follow-up method, iii) what is a "poorly defined population", which criteria were used, iv) which definition is used for "not of recent onset" v) what is the reason to exclude studies with non-systematic assessment of clinical findings (which criteria were used), non-consecutive or non-randomized recruitment of patients.

The first and third paragraph of the results are part of the Materials and Methods section.
**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

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

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have no competing interests