Reviewer's report

Title: Efficacy of ambroxol lozenges for pharyngitis: a meta-analysis

Version: 1 Date: 22 September 2012

Reviewer: Taixiang Wu

Reviewer's report:

1. In the Data Source section, the term “Cochrane Data base of systematic reviews” is not exactly correct, it should be “the CENTRAL of Cochrane Data Base of systematic reviews”;

2. A writing skill problem: the expected outcomes of the meta-analysis should be described in the methods rather than in the “Results” section directly, but after that list the results in the “Results” section. This means that what outcomes were planned to be assessed by the meta-analysis, and then what were the results. Thus, this is the description logic.

3. Table 2: Jadad score should be Jadad score

A question about the methodology issue: the author stated that “We used the Cochrane Collaboration tool for assessment of the risk of bias”. However, the Jadad score was used. We have known that there seven points in the Cochrane methods (six points are showing in the table 2, the remain one point is “free from selective reporting”), but the Jadad score has three points only and the total scores is five (randomization, blinding, loss of follow-up). So, how the 4 scores was rated by Jadad score? Please specify in detail in the text.

By the way, the Cochrane Handbook did not recommend the Jadad score. How do you think about it?

I would suggest you use the Risk of bias, rather than the Jadad score.

4. “…..tool for assessment of the risk of bias [7].We used a fixed-effect model to combine…..”. Please get a space there.

5. I would suggest put figure 2 and figure 3 in a forest plot together rather than separated two figures, similar as two subgroup analysis, conduct a Subtotal but not Total.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests