Reviewer's report

Title: S-carboxymethylcysteine in the treatment of glue ear: quantitative systematic review

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Reviewer: Dr Ian Williamson

Level of interest: not specified

Advice on publication: Other (see below)

I think this is an improved manuscript however I think it is still confusing in it's nomenclature. If the term acute otitis media is used, which is a legitimate search term, nonetheless this should be justified in the background. As it is we read about glue ear in the background and then find that an aim of the search is to identify those children with acute otitis media. This requires explanation. In any event using the drug name as a key search term this is probably irrelevant, it just leaves me and doubtless others in the absence of an explanation/justification with the incorrect impression that the authors do not know the differences between acute otitis media and OME or glue ear. This is a misrepresentation which is unfortunately compounded in the first two sentences in the second paragraph of the background section where it appears that the incidence is less than the prevalence for glue ear. Surely it is better to expand at this point to show that the authors are talking about point prevalences of effusions as predicted by tympanometry, only a proportion of which go on to meet the definition of glue ear;and that whilst acute infective episodes of OM are usually associated with acute effusions these two conditions are very
different clinically as anyone in practice will testify. A rationale for using this search aim/strategy, whilst acknowledging clinical realities would only take 1-2 sentences.

**Competing interests:**

None declared.