Reviewer's report

Title: Most bowel symptoms do not indicate colorectal cancer and polyps: a systematic review

Version: 1 Date: 25 February 2011

Reviewer: Adriana Perez

Reviewer's report:

This is a systematic review of the association between bowel symptoms and colorectal cancer or polyps.

Major Compulsory Revisions

Introduction: Omit the variable prediction given that the systematic review with different type of studies does not allow you to establish a prediction estimate but only associations.

Page 6, Second paragraph, line 4: Please clarify which terms were used as random effect and which ones were used as fixed effects.

Appendix 3: Needs clarification on symbols within tables. What is CBH and others? There is no information in the table and the table has to stand alone. The order of footnotes for the table does not match the table order, please re-arrange.

Appendix 4: It is inconsistency between what is shown as DOR (Spell out also) and what is stated in text regarding as OR or authors need to explain to the readers what is shown inside the tables if not DOR values which is only summarize as one overall value in text. This is confusing. What is the definition of New in table? Please include the year of the publications.

Figures titles: All figure titles need to spelled out acronyms. Spell out to readers what is the line in figures. What are the ovals and what is the + sign. Also plots should start at 0,0 coordinates. These are continuous measurements therefore the XY coordinates should start at 0 and there should be no distance from 0 to the other 0 as shown in current version. Also. Maximum values should be 1,1 instead of additional values in graphs presented.

Figures: Authors need to define what is CRC for readers standing alone in figures. The dotted lines from black dots to 45 degree dot line are confusing the purpose. They will need a different type of line given that dotted lines have different meanings in all figures.

Authors listed the presence of figures 9-16 but they not presented in current manuscript
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests