Reviewer's report

Title: Variable-stiffness colonoscope makes colonoscope easier? A meta-analysis of the efficacy compared variable stiffness colonoscope with standard adult colonoscope

Version: 4 Date: 13 April 2012

Reviewer: Javier Sola Vera

Reviewer's report:

Minor essential revisions:
Numerous misspelled words. The text includes numerous grammatical and syntactical errors (including, extensively, the body of the submission). Required a complete review by an expert in English.

In the "discussion" the authors state: "In the subgroup analysis in our meta-analysis, the cecal intubation time shortened with the use of adult VSC, while Othman et al. found no difference between these two instruments." The problem is that there is probably an error in the article by Othman et al. While the text says that there is little difference in cecal intubation time in favor of the VSC, the corresponding figure does not shows any difference. This is probably due to a typographical error, because the confidence interval in the text is -2.00, -0.06 while the figure is -2.00, 0.06 (despite the "p" in the figure is 0.04). Given this controversy, I recommend the authors a focus on commenting on the full group differences with respect to meta-analysis of Othman.

In the "discussion" section, paragraph on complications, add the reference 14. In the paragraph on limitations add more limitations: no universal method for using VSC across the studies. Large tertiary centers which limits generalization to other practice settings.

In "conclusions" section, I can not understand the phrase "probably complicated the procedure at the mean time." The conclusions should be more easily understood. Hard to follow. The conclusion "the VSC could be useful for patients undergoing total unsedated colonoscopy" is not based on any results so I recommend removing it.

Major compulsory revisions:
In the section "results", subsection "Subgroup and sensitivity analysis" is not explained what type of analysis sensitivity to assess heterogeneity. What type of analysis performed?.

which studies were exclude and which were the results in changes to the OR and WMDs.

Discretionary revisions:
Table 2: in "cecal intubation rate", Why include 9 studies, if the meta-analysis included 8?
Figure 4 is not necessary.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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

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

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests