Reviewer's report

Title: Plastic or metal stents for benign biliary strictures: a systematic review

Version: 1 Date: 12 August 2009

Reviewer: Michel Kahaleh

Reviewer's report:

The authors are publishing a systematic review comparing plastic to metal stents for benign biliary strictures: unfortunately instead on focusing on plastic versus USEMS, they incorporated limited data (from 2 studies) on CSEMS which confuses their work.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1-Remove all data on CSEMS and focus the whole work including conclusions from that paper on analyzing USEMS versus plastic stents)
2-Comparing metal versus plastic stents without comparing the number of ERCP sessions in each group is not fair. Please provide the mean session of each group and assess if this difference is statistically significant.
3-USEMS are typically not removed, or can be very challenging to remove. A point has to be made to clarify that to the reader.
4-Indication for placement and etiology of benign biliary stricture need to be well documented and analyzed. Statistical analysis should be performed to assess how comparable those 2 groups are.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I have received research funding from Olympus, COnmed, Boston-Scientific, Axcan Pharma and Alimaxx.