Reviewer's report

Title: Efficacy of a new absorbent pad on incontinence-associated dermatitis in older women: cluster randomized controlled trial

Version: 2 Date: 12 December 2011

Reviewer: Mikel Gray

Reviewer's report:

Most research on IAD focuses on defined skin care regimens; additional research focusing on absorptive pad technology is needed and welcome.

Marketing language must be removed from the article; for example, the article the experimental pad should be described as such and not as "novel" or "new and improved" as in the current draft.

The authors must justify why all patients were placed in the control pad at night; this is a major limitation of the study and must be accounted for in the limitations section along with a more explicit acknowledgement of this curious and regrettable design flaw in the methods section.

On page 8, Participant Flow subhead, the authors state that 12 patients were excluded owing to "poor medical condition". This statement must be further explained and a clear rationale provided for this exclusion.

The discussion must be revised to consider the effect of prolonged exposure to moisture in greater detail. Research on the deleterious effects of pH and ammonia is especially scarce while research on IAD and excessive moisture is a bit more robust.

The absence of a power analysis must be acknowledged in the limitations section; this is a significant weakness of the study.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I served on a clinical advisory board to SAGE products (Cary IL).