Reviewer’s report

Title: Peginterferon alpha based therapy for chronic hepatitis B focusing on HBsAg clearance or seroconversion: a meta-analysis of controlled clinical trials

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Reviewer: Melissa Osborn

Reviewer’s report:

The authors present a meta-analysis of data published to data for peginterferon for chronic hepatitis B, focusing on the outcome of HBsAg seroconversion. Overall, the methodology of the meta-analysis is sound and I have only a few critiques:

Discretionary Revisions

1. Could the authors perform and comment upon in the manuscript a sensitivity analysis including only the high-quality studies to see if the results of the meta-analysis were different?

2. Although the authors comment on the possibility of publication bias, it would be nice to see a funnel plot ascertaining this.

3. The biggest reservation I have about the manuscript is the necessity of a meta-analysis when all of the large published controlled clinic trials have reached the same conclusion. Typically, meta-analyses are constructed when clinical trials have produced conflicting answers to the same question; to strengthen the power to detect the true result. In the case of most of the manuscripts comparisons, the trials analyzed have been concordant in their conclusions, while differing only in their magnitude. While a summary OR may provide a concise estimation of the treatment effect, it adds little to the overall literature beyond the contributions of the original studies, most of which were well-designed, well-powered clinical trials. Perhaps the authors could comment on what their meta-analysis adds to the literature in this regard.

Minor essential revisions

1. The paper could benefit from being edited by a native English speaker.

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.