Reviewer’s report

Title: Methods For Identifying Surgical Wound Infection After Discharge From Hospital: a systematic review

Version: 3 Date: 9 May 2006

Reviewer: Richard Platt

Reviewer’s report:

General
The revisions are helpful, and the manuscript continues to make several worthwhile points.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Although the report is now clearer about including relevant articles already reported by Bruce, it is not clear to me how the authors selected articles from the Bruce report to include in this analysis. I have not checked all the Bruce references, but one example that seems relevant to this report is Sands et al. Surgical site infections occurring after hospital discharge. J Infect Dis. 1996 Apr;173(4):963-70. (I’m one of the als).

I appreciate the statement of “wide variation in, and limited agreement between health professional judgement regarding the presence of wound infection” on page 18. However, this seems to me a more fundamental barrier to developing an adequate system of surveillance (before or after discharge) than the methodologic limits of extant studies, or the need for better tools to stratify risk.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

No competing interests.