Reviewer's report

Title: Pregabalin, the lidocaine plaster and duloxetine in patients with refractory neuropathic pain: A systematic review

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Reviewer: Cory Toth

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Pregabalin, the lidocaine plaster and duloxetine in patients with refractory neuropathic pain: A systematic review
Chapman et al
The authors resubmit their systematic review of the literature for the use of three agents for neuropathic pain in situations where refractory pain is present.

I appreciate the authors`responses to suggestions, but there still remain some unclear aspects of the manuscript and their study.

Major Compulsory Revisions

The authors did state aims – this is correct. However, every scientific manuscript should have a hypothesis stated - this is needed for the reader to understand why this research was undertaken. If the research was performed to simply determine if there was an evidence base for pharmacological treatments, then this would be rather uninteresting. If there was a hypothesis that one agent would be superior, or that all agents would be equal, then at least there is a rationale for why this hard work was undertaken.

The authors explain that one of pregabalin, lidocaine, and duloxetine is used at 2nd line or later and this was their reason for their selection. However, a review of the graph provided indicates that the two most common 2nd line agents were gabapentin and amitryptyline, agents not selected to be examined in this study. There still needs to be some justification as to why these agents were not selected to be studied.

Otherwise, I am comfortable with the changes made in the manuscript, but the two above points still need to be clarified.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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'