Reviewer's report

Title: Mary Crosse Project: Systematic reviews and grading the value of neonatal tests in predicting long term outcomes

Version: 1 Date: 25 September 2009

Reviewer: Jim Neilson

Reviewer's report:

This is a study protocol of an ambitious programme of work to be undertaken to systematically review the capability of important indices of neonatal status to predict long term outcome. As the authors point out, current standards are based on consensus and there are conflicting findings. This work has not been done previously on this scale and using up to date methodologies of the evolving science of research synthesis of cohort studies. The results will have an important impact on clinical care and audit, clinical research, and medicolegal considerations.

The paper is well written (single typo spotted page 2 line 2). The case for the programme is well argued in the background. The methods are very clear and the literature search will include non-English language literature. This comes from a strong group at the forefront of this type of research synthesis and this is reflected in the quality of methods section - about which I have no criticism to make.

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.