Reviewer's report

Title: Optimal schedule of Bacillus Calmette-Guerin for non-muscle-invasive bladder cancer: A meta-analysis of comparative studies

Version: 2 Date: 23 April 2013

Reviewer: Claire Vale

Reviewer's report:

My feelings on re-review in line with the questions for reviewers to consider are as follows:

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
   No change from previous review.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
   The methods are appropriate for a meta-analysis of RCTs. I am still unconvinced by the combining of randomised and non-randomised trials and would still prefer that primary results for this review were based on RCT data alone. This may reduce power but would be more appropriate and easier for the reader to interpret. I had previously suggested that the authors should present a clear rationale for including different study designs in the meta-analysis however this is still missing and would be a vital addition in my opinion. I would advise the authors to read and refer to chapter 13 of the Cochrane handbook of systematic reviews of interventions (http://handbook.cochrane.org/) which addresses the issue of using non RCT designs in systematic reviews.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
   Related to the above. Just to note that in the discussion, the authors state that the RCTs were of low quality - however according to Table 4, the majority of the RCTs included are judged to be Level of Evidence 1b - higher than any of the non-randomised studies.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   I have not looked again at the full PRISMA reporting guideline however I feel that many aspects of that are reported.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   Again - given that many of the results are based on a mixture of RCT and
non-RCT data and that some of the outcomes use only non-RCT data, I feel the interpretation needs to be more cautious in places and I think that the authors should not state that they are so confident the stability of their findings - in particular where they are based on mainly non-randomised trials. I would think it more appropriate to allow readers to judge whether they feel this is level 1a evidence.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Title - Yes
   Abstract: Yes

7. Is the writing acceptable?

   There are still some major inadequacies in the language used such that in places it is hard to understand the results. Furthermore, the discussion feels quite jumbled and needs to be better structured to allow readers to follow it more clearly. Some sectioning may help with this if the journal style allows.

   In reviewing the revised manuscript, please consider whether the authors have answered your points sufficiently well to allow their manuscript to be published. As before, we would like you to divide your comments into the following three categories:

   - Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)
   
   - Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
   
   - Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

   1. Rationale for using mixed study designs
   2. Clearer language
   3. More caution in the interpretation especially for outcomes with less or no RCT data to support them