Reviewer's report

Title: The use of a pre-operative scoring system for the prediction of phacoemulsification case difficulty and the selection of appropriate cases to be performed by trainees

Version: 1 Date: 11 October 2006

Reviewer: Ivan Goldberg

Reviewer's report:

General

This is an important topic, and efforts to address it meaningfully are praiseworthy.

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

There are several queries that arise from the manuscript:
1 Who scored the patients with respect to anticipated difficulty pre-operatively? 2 How was this verified?
3 If 170 consecutive patients were assessed, how complete was the data?
4 It appears no cases were excluded pre-operatively. Is this correct?
5 The reasons advanced to justify exclusion of operations that were complicated, do not seem valid. This serves to bias the results significantly, and greatly weakens the conclusions that can be drawn.
6 Objective end-points in the surgery, such as posterior capsule rupture, vitreous loss, iris damage, leaking corneal wounds would offer more robust comparison with pre-operative assessment than a subjective "gestalt" by the surgeon.

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.