Reviewer’s report

Title: Probiotics for infantile colic: A Systematic Review

Version: 2 Date: 23 September 2013

Reviewer: H. Szajewska

Reviewer’s report:

Most of the comments were adequately addressed. However, a number of issues need further clarification.

ABSTRACT

• Results. The sentence ‘The studies were assessed as good quality’ is not correct. One of the studies (Savino et al. 2007) was methodologically weak (no allocation concealment, no blinding, and no intention-to-treat analysis; this may result in selection, performance, and/or attrition biases and, eventually, invalidate the results).

• Results. I suggest changing “Probiotic supplementation significantly and progressively shortened crying times to 7 days reaching a plateau at three weeks post initiation” to “Probiotic supplementation COMPARED WITH SIMETHICONE OR PLACEBO…”.

• Results. Similarly, please clearly state that probiotics COMPARED WITH PLACEBO significantly increased the treatment success.

DATA SYNTHESIS

• Previously, I asked the Authors to provide the rationale for using a fixed effect model. No changes were made in the manuscript. In their rebuttal letter, the Authors stated that ‘the true effect under analysis would not vary across studies since the participants were similar in their characteristics as were the interventions (L. reuteri).’ Indeed, the interventions were similar (if one agrees on the bioequivalence of L reuteri DSM 17938 and L reuteri ATCC 55730); however, the comparison groups differed (simethicone or placebo). I believe that this issue needs to be addressed. By the way, the crying time at 7 days was significant only in the fixed effects model, and it was not significant in the random effects model.

RESULTS

• Effect of L reuteri on crying time. Please clearly indicate the comparison groups (simethicone and placebo).

• Effect of L reuteri on overall response rate. Please clearly indicate the comparison groups.

FIGURE LEGENDS

• Figures 2 and 3. Please change ‘probiotics’ to ‘L reuteri ATCC 55730 and L reuteri DSM 17938’.
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.