Reviewer’s report

Title: A systematic review on tracheostomy decannulation: discovering for a new era. A proposal of a quantitative semiquantitative clinical score

Version: 2 Date: 11 November 2014

Reviewer: Gabriele Bassi

Reviewer’s report:

Discretionary Revision: Lines from 94 to 99

The increased WOB and flow resistance induced by tracheostomy is compared to a patient with normal airways during nose or mouth breathing. In the clinical scenario tracheostomy is performed in critically ill patients who could not maintain spontaneous breathing or in intubated patients. In this context tracheostomy generally reduces WOB and allows spontaneous breathing or at least weaning from mechanical ventilation. The text from line 94 to 99 could be misleading suggesting that tracheostomy could generally increase WOB. I would suggest the Authors to avoid this misleading.

Discretionary Revision: Lines from 117-119

The sentences are not clear. Why the attempt of breathing with tube capping should be considered unusual since it is used to assess patient’s readiness for decanulation? I needed time to understand the meaning of “breathing through solutions of continuity”. I would suggest the Author to better explain whether the trial of tube capping is clinically used despite not well studied or if this test is considered not useful.

Minor Essential Revisions: “Quantitative semiQuantitative score”.

The two steps: major criteria and minor criteria represent a pragmatic and clinical approach as far as the proposal to identify a score from 0 to 20 or from 0 to 5. Despite the lack of evidence I would suggest the Authors to clarify or, at least, try to better explain why the score is made on a threshold of 20 points and/or 5 points. If the Authors do not support the importance of the numeric value of the score I would suggest to better declare it and do not quote the numeric example.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

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