Reviewer's report

Title: Sildenafil (Viagra): a meta-analysis of clinical trial reports

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Reviewer: Dr SJ Smith

Level of interest: A paper whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Advice on publication: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the compulsory revisions

Although the data source for this meta-analysis is not published literature, it demonstrates that meta-analysis could be helpful early on in presenting findings even before published literature is available. Thus, the use of 'early' meta-analysis can be beneficial. For verification purposes, the original data used to perform the analyses should be available. An issue here is whether such data can be made available for validation of findings.

I do not find however, the usual aspects of meta-analysis in the tables however. For example, in table 1, for the dose of 25 mg, only the summary information is given. There is no information about the variation among the three studies for this dose. This situation is repeated for all tables. Thus, although summary statistics are given, no information on heterogeneity is shown. This is typically a key component of meta-analysis.

The authors need to show the degree of heterogeneity among the original trials.

Level of interest
A paper whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

This paper demonstrates that pre-publication analyses can be important.

Competing interests:

None declared.