Reviewer’s report

Title: The Hall Technique; a randomised control clinical trial of a novel method of managing carious primary molars in general dental practice: outcomes at two years.

Version: 3 Date: 8 August 2007

Reviewer: Wil Sanden

Reviewer’s report:

General
This study, a RCT, describes an interesting modification of an old technique for treatment of dental caries in deciduous molar teeth in a high caries risk population. The paper is well written and easy to read. The use of the CONSORT diagram gives a good insight in this study. After having read this paper, I could better understand the other paper from the same authors, I received [about patients’, parents and GDPs’ preferences] some weeks ago. To understand this study, presented in two papers, they should be read together, as otherwise some necessary information is missing. Therefore, I would recommend to combine both papers, as this will make the paper more readable, and thus this interesting study more understandable.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1) After reviewing the first study, some weeks ago, I wrote: “I have some doubts on the description of this study/RCT, as e.g. no power calculation [sample size] or CI are given [see usual form for ‘critical appraisal of RCTs’]. More background information is necessary to understand the setting and findings of this study…” After reading this [second] part of the study, I received all the information I need. To understand this study, both papers should be read together. Therefore, I recommend that the manuscripts should be combined and treated as one paper.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1) List of figures [pages 20,21] is correct, but does not correspond with written # in heading of individual figures, as all figures are listed as ‘figure 1’ [footer shows the right figure#].
2) Page 8, line 8: were radiographs reassessed independently by the two authors? If so [as I assume], I would add that.
3) Page 11, lines 7 – 9 [Non-visualisation …debatable]: this belongs to the ‘discussion’ section.
4) Page 15-16: the message is that some ‘old’ ideas about caries management are not valid anymore; why spend so many words on that? This study represents a sound RCT, and as such the results should be reliable. I recommend to shorten the text.

5) Page 17, line 25 [This was with...] till page 18, end of section: what does this add? I recommend to remove this part.

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 of importance 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