Reviewer’s report

Title: The NTI-tss device for the therapy of bruxism, temporomandibular disorders, and headache: where do we stand? A qualitative systematic review of the literature

Version: 1 Date: 25 February 2008
Reviewer: Carlos Flores Mir

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

Methods: What were the specific selection criteria? Although it could be implied from reading the introduction not everyone implies things similarly.

In most systematic reviews there are two selection stages. One based on the identified abstracts and/or titles and a second, and usually last stage, based on the retrieved full articles from the selection in the first stage. Why seemed to have both stages fussed in one for this review?

Why to consider in evidence-based document case reports for objective #2 as the ones obtained from the MAUDE database? Case reports are low-level evidence-based documents that do not provide more than anecdotal comments.

Conclusions: I suggest to be more cautious when talking about the side effects. I feel that there is no enough evidence to support any comment not to say a conclusion.

The first dotted conclusion is not supported by evidence presented in this review. It sounds more as an speculation based on the authors personal experiences. No study that directly analyzes the use of the NTI-tss appliance after unsuccessful use of stabilization appliances has been presented.

Minor Essential Revisions

Abstract: Modify when applicable as per my suggestions.

Methods: The search strategy is not consistent between PubMed and the rest of the databases (term temporomandibular disorders and similar).

Results: A flow diagram could help the reader understand the selection process from the initially identified hits to the finally selected articles. That information is lost inside table 13, which primarily identifies the level of evidence of the retrieved documents.

There seems to be a typo in the second paragraph of results. Figure 2 is a photo of the device intraorally and has nothing to do with strength of evidence.

Paragraph four of results should be reworded as it is confusing when the authors write: â##In four studies [22]â##; â## Only one reference is cited although after following the text three more references appear.
Discussion: I would suggest to remove the last sentence of paragraph one. It is a strong statement that generates controversy. I personally do not think is true in every situation. For example there could be ethical considerations that would preclude randomization for a given therapy.

Again I would suggest be more careful with using reported cases to make implications about side effects. A line in the paragraph dealing with side effects goes in this direction. Ideally side effects should have come from RCT data not from individual case reports. Some sentences about the methodological validity of information retrieved from this distinct study types could be beneficial to inform the naive reader without too much understanding about methodology.

**What next?: Accept after minor essential 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