Reviewer's report

Title: Utilization of the Atraumatic Restorative Treatment approach in a group of public oral health operators in South Africa: a 5-year longitudinal study

Version: 1 Date: 30 January 2009

Reviewer: Maria Fidela Navarro

Reviewer's report:

The purpose of this study was fulfilled, since the results reveal the impact of training in the use of ART over a period of 5 years.

The abstract was well structured.

The objectives of this study are well defined.

The methods are appropriate and well described.

Data are sound; however, some more details should be included.

Is it possible to calculate the type of restorations (Class I, II, III...) that have been made?

What were the reasons for the 8 operators to use a very low level of ART as a protocol? Please, specify the reasons in the discussion.

The first paragraph on page 7 is not clear as to the percentages of using ART treatment for permanent dentition after 5 years as compared to 1 year: from 3.9 to 42.7%?

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'