Reviewer’s report

Title: Infection rates associated with epidural indwelling catheters for seven days or longer: systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 1 Date: 23 January 2007

Reviewer: Paul Myles

Reviewer’s report:

General
This well-written study addresses an important issue. It is a niche area/problem, and this publication will provide some very useful information.

The Introduction, Methods and Results sections are clear and complete.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
None

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
This review provides a (valid) quantitative analysis, but it could include some details about avoiding infection: the Discussion should include some brief comments about what factors are important in minimising epidural infection in this group of patients (oncology, palliative care, etc).

Pg11, para3: I don't like the presentation of the numerical data. How about: "When epidural catheters were in place in the setting, the incidence of catheter infection was 1.3% (1 in 83 patients). Delete the per million statements.

Pg14: line2: delete sensible, use "reliable"

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.