Author's response to reviews

Title: Systematic review of the use of honey as a wound dressing

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Andrew Vickers

1 We disagreed with Andrew over the use of the Oxford scale of quality assessment. We still do. The fact that none of the studies gave sufficient information to judge that they were properly randomised, and were not apparently blind, and gave no information about withdrawals and drop outs is fundamental to how we should judge them. We cannot ignore this, and dropping the Oxford scale does this.

As a compromise, we have performed a minor sensitivity analysis on the basis of OPVS, though we considered that to be obvious from the information presented in Table 1.

2 Andrew may wish to give clinical recommendations on the basis of this evidence. We do not.

3 Andrew may wish to delineate all aspects of wound research. We think that a bridge too far in an area with less evidence than we (and he) would like.

This isn't a case of just being awkward. Rather it is that we are less willing than he is to extrapolate from what we presently have. The answer is probably to accept the paper as it is (having addressed the first round of comments, and some of the second) and to ask Andrew to write an editorial to accompany it. An editorial has more scope for addressing clinical recommendations and future research. Another candidate would be Steve Thomas, of the Surgical Materials Testing Laboratory (SMTL) in Bridgend (http://www.worldwidewounds.com/)