Reviewer's report

Title: Acupuncture as a therapeutic treatment option for threatened miscarriage.

Version: 1 Date: 8 January 2012

Reviewer: Lucky Saraswat

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript is a debate exploring possible use of acupuncture as a treatment option for threatened miscarriage. The debate is justified as currently there is lack of definitive clinical treatment for threatened miscarriage. The only intervention offered is supportive treatment which often is also integral part of complementary and alternative medicine.

Major essential revisions

Though the argument is valid, the authors are unable to support their argument of using acupuncture with convincing evidence. Acupuncture is an intervention and interventions are best evaluated using randomised controlled trials. If there is lack of randomised controlled trials it should be specified and any existing case-control trials or cohort studies should be mentioned. The authors themselves state (last paragraph page 8) that 'acupuncture is a complex treatment intervention.......these nonspecific components, such as providing attention, touch, and the development of a therapeutic supportive relationship contribute to treatment effects'. This probably makes it impossible to distinguish whether it is the 'supportive care' component of acupuncture that might be providing benefit for which there is now sufficient evidence. This can only be elucidated if there is a comparative study between acupuncture and supportive care as well as acupuncture and no intervention.

Moreover, the only evidence provided in support of acupuncture by the authors is vague (paragraphs 2 and 3 on page 9) with no data to support it. I recommend that authors provide any objective data from references 31 to 37 which they have used for supporting their argument of acupuncture as a treatment modality.

The table 1 is regarding supportive care in recurrent miscarriage studies which is already well established and there is no relationship of this table with acupuncture in threatened miscarriage. I recommend that this table should be removed so that readers are not misled to extrapolate the results of this table to acupuncture use. Instead authors should provide a table for any acupuncture data if available.

They have correctly identified that further research is needed to establish the role of acupuncture. However their conclusion 'It is hoped that this.......in their care.' (page 10) does not support their argument 'Acupuncture as a therapeutic treatment option for threatened miscarriage' as in their concluding statement they are only emphasising the need to 'raise awareness amongst practitioners of CAM as to possible benefits of promoting supportive care as a treatment option.' It
seems that the authors are mixing up the two entities of 'CAM' and 'Supportive care' at several places within the manuscript. Though supportive care may be an integral aspect of certain CAM, it can also be provided without any adjunctive CAM or clinical treatment.
Reference 2 is incorrectly cited and should be corrected.

Minor Essential Revisions
Overall the quality of English is good with few typos only.
Further proof reading is recommended

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

**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