Reviewer’s report

Title: Meta-analysis of acupuncture for relieving non-organic dyspeptic symptoms suggestive of diabetic gastroparesis

Version: 3 Date: 22 July 2013

Reviewer: HYANGSOOK LEE

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have done a lot of work for revision and risk of bias assessment now appears adequate, but the GRADE evidence profile table is seriously flawed. Adequate downgrading does not seem to have been considered (e.g. the authors report that there is no serious inconsistency even though they pooled statistically very heterogenous studies); number of studies should be those included in the pooling, but the authors put the whole number of studies reporting corresponding outcomes; in addition, it does not seem to be reasonable to combine sham-controlled trial and active treatment-controlled trials as they are clinically and methodologically different.

In the conclusion, the authors state that 'acupuncture may be effective to improve dyspeptic symptoms in diabetic gastroparesis' and also methodological limitations of the included studies are mentioned. However, this promising result is based on the outcome of response rate and it is a highly subjective outcome. The patient expectancy (placebo) can be a major source of bias in these trials when the subjective outcome such as response rate is adopted. Such limitations do not seem to have been sufficiently addressed in the discussion.

I don’t see what information a funnel plot (figure 4) conveys with these 8 studies.

Even after language editing, there are still a number of grammatical errors and misspellings, e.g. one trials, two trial, trail, as previous reported, etc.

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

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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.