Reviewer's report

**Title:** The Efficacy of Acupuncture as an Adjuvant Therapy in Lung Cancer: a Systematic Review and Meta-analysis

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**Reviewer:** Zhen Zheng

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**Recommendation:** Major revision

**Overall impression and the strengths**

The authors conducted a thorough search and data extraction of papers selected. The presentation of the results is clear and easy to follow. Overall the reporting follows and meets PRISMA guideline.

**Major weaknesses – Major Compulsory revision**

1. One of the major weaknesses is the inconsistency of aim, data extraction and results. The authors aimed to assess “the efficacy of acupuncture for lung cancer patients in the present study”. Readers assume that the review should be about if acupuncture is effective and safe to be used to treat lung cancer, as if chemotherapy treats lunch cancer. Yet, the data extraction and results indicate that the interest of the authors were of a wide range, including the effects of acupuncture on immunomodulation, side effects of conventional therapy, function and quality of life of patients. I suggest the authors to revise the title, introduction and aims to reflect the data collection and extraction.

2. An operational definition of acupuncture was not provided. Under “search strategy”, “acupuncture OR acupressure OR acupoint OR massage OR meridian OR moxibustion OR moxa” were used. Readers can only assume that acupuncture in this review includes acupoint stimulation with needles, massage, pressure or moxibustion. Data from Table 1 show that the majority of included studies used acupoint injection of Chinese herbs. Such an intervention was explained in neither the methods, nor the introduction. The question is if the effect was from acupoint injection or from herbs? Furthermore, some studies had acupuncture treatment once (Zhou et al 2003) or 7 days (Zhang 2010), whereas others had treatment for 4-8 weeks (Table 1). Are results of these studies comparable? A clear definition of acupuncture will be helpful to answer the questions above. Further information about acupuncture is required, such as frequency of treatment and duration of each session.

3. In all included studies various forms of acupuncture were applied as an adjunct to conventional, western medical interventions or anti-tumor herbs for lung cancer. Neither introduction, aims nor did title explain that acupuncture was
an adjunct in this review.

4. The current discussion focuses on explaining mechanisms underlying the observed results. Limitations of the study were only briefly mentioned at the end of Discussion. I suggest that the authors focus the discussion on the new findings made in this review, operational definition of acupuncture, validity of the control interventions, and how limitations of the current review might impact on the interpretation of the results.

Writing
The manuscript requires further language editing.

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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.