Reviewer’s report

Title: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Use of Oral Zinc in the Treatment of Hepatic Encephalopathy

Version: 1 Date: 15 November 2012

Reviewer: marzia lazzerini

Reviewer’s report:

The paper is well written, however I made some suggestions that could improve it before accepting it.

MAJOR SUGGESTED REVISIONS

Abstract – methods “Only prospective randomized clinical trials”: remove “prospective” (RCT can not be retrospective)

Abstract_ results: reorganize this section. First describe what outcomes are reported (“A limitation of this analysis is that there was heterogeneity in the outcomes reported in the included trials” ); Then put the sentence “a significant improvement in performance on the number connection test, etc…” . Remove the following sentence “which precluded evidence-based analysis of significant outcomes of hepatic encephalopathy.”

Abstract “with a significant improvement in performance on the number connection test (SMD –0.54; 95% CI –0.90 to –0.18) but not with reduction in encephalopathy recurrence (RR 0.64; 95% CI 0.26 to 1.59). -Add in brackets the number of studies and number of patients in each comparison

Search methods for identification of studies: add the search strategy

Results

Synthesis of results- Start by saying that meta-analysis on primary outcomes was not possible, due to the few existing studies and the heterogeneity in reporting outcomes.

Risk of bias within studies: All trials included were at risk of bias. Add if the risk was medium or low risk.

Results, line 203 “The quantitative analyses was performed only for secondary outcomes” substitute in “the meta-analysis”

Table 1 – In the raw describing outcomes I suggest to list what outcomes are considered in the study (so that to provide an immediate view of what types of outcomes are reported by literature). Results of the studies are reported in the text (or you could add another raw).

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
None