Reviewer’s report

Title: A systematic review and meta-analysis of the effect and safety of ginger in the treatment of pregnancy-associated nausea and vomiting

Version: 1 Date: 13 January 2014

Reviewer: Maretha M Opperman

Reviewer’s report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

Comment 1

The forest plot and Table 1, which describe the characteristics of the included studies, are very comprehensive and easy to understand. However, significance of the main results have not been indicated in Table 1. It will be helpful if significance can be indicated e.g. Chittumma 200720 - Ginger was significantly/non-significantly more effective than vitamin B6 for relief from NVP.

In some instances, as discussed in the manuscript, it is not always preferable to use forest plots for reporting results. It will therefore make more sense to me if the studies, which were pooled in a meta-analyses, are tabulated. The reason be that it is difficult to follow the natural flow of the results. It also takes quite some time to read through the results. It would be of great help if the results can be summarized in a table and only the most important findings emphasized in the text. Please see suggestions below on how to compile the suggested table.

Table 2: Pooled estimates of effect size (95% confidence intervals) expressed as weighted mean difference for the effects of ginger vs placebo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Number of studies</th>
<th>Participants (do not repeat if already in Table 1)</th>
<th>RR</th>
<th>WMD 95% CI</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Heterogeneity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adverse events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous abortions</td>
<td>29,30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.65-15.11</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heartburn</td>
<td>19,29,30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>0.89-28.61</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other side effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment 2

The first paragraph of the discussion is merely a repetition of the limitations of the study. This paragraph should be incorporated under the heading “Strength and limitations of the study”.

Comment 3
The authors need to ensure that the discussion is not just a repetition of results or facts mentioned in the introduction. Authors should also employ other literature on ginger and pregnancy for the discussion.

Comment 4

The authors should perhaps reconsider the necessity of this review OR approach this topic from a different angle because the following peer reviewed articles with very similar objectives were published in the recent past:


Please comment on how this specific manuscript can further contribute to the topic of ginger and pregnancy apart from the publications indicated above.

- Minor Essential Revisions

The author can be trusted to make these. For example, missing labels on figures, the wrong use of a term, spelling mistakes.

• Line 16 page 4: H. pylori change to Helicobacter pylori and abbreviated as H. pylori

• Line 11 page 5: Zingiber officinale Roscoe not Zingiber Officinale Roscoe

• Line 13 page 5: Indicate in text references briefly e.g. [8-12] not [8, 9, 10, 11, 12]

• Second line from below, page 26: The term “significantly” is not used in the correct context here. Significance means p<0.05 which is not the case with the reported results. Please also check the rest of the manuscript where the term “significantly” is used.

A statistician trained in meta-analysis has been employed to ensure application of proper statistical analytical techniques

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'