Reviewer's report

Title: Comparative effectiveness of antihypertensive medication for primary prevention of cardiovascular disease. Systematic review and multiple treatments meta-analysis.

Version: 2 Date: 15 November 2011

Reviewer: Fiona Campbell

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
Yes

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
Yes, these have been improved for this second submission. The use of the description 'smaller studies' on page 4 within the eligibility criteria is still unhelpful. The authors response is to state that they did not use study size as a criterion for inclusion. They should simply state that they excluded studies designed to evaluate effects on 'surrogate' outcomes. The final sentence, states, 'by excluding small trials'. This point remains unclear and should be addressed.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
The study appears robust.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
Yes, the discussion regarding study limitations and the grounding within the wider literature is helpful. I would only challenge the conclusion that the effects of publication bias and funding from industry are anticipated to be small. There is inadequate grounds upon which to draw this conclusion and it is also a controversial finding. It would need to be substantiated.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Yes

7. Is the writing acceptable?
Yes

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests