Reviewer's report

Title: Vasectomy Surgical Techniques: A Systematic Review

Version: Date: 3 February 2004

Reviewer: Kavita K Nanda

Reviewer's report:

General

This is a very well conducted systematic review of an important topic.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Page 4. Specify the types of interventions and types of outcomes (for both approach to the vas and vasectomy technique) established a priori as criteria for inclusion.

Page 5. Combining case series by the same authors to represent historical controls is an interesting approach, and one that is not commonly used. The authors should discuss the weaknesses of this approach for the average reader, probably in the discussion section.

Page 7-9. Use of terms such as “failure risk” is confusing. When presenting the results, consistently use the terms for vasectomy that were defined a priori. Clearly separate occlusive from contraceptive effectiveness.

Page 13. Last paragraph. You previously concluded that only cautery with FI was more effective than other techniques, and that data were limited and conflicting regarding cautery without FI. Your conclusion here should be reworded to say only “cautery with FI” (delete the especially when combined part).

Page 15. Last paragraph. I would add that another remaining question is whether FI with cautery more effective than FI alone.

Page 25. I don’t understand the sample size when described as “109 of 128”. What does that mean? Not enrolled? Lost to f/u? Not analyzed? Please clarify for each study in all relevant tables.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

In general, do not begin sentences with numbers or abbreviations. Also, make sure that numbers in the table match those in text and abstract.

Page 3. The term “occlusive effectiveness” is not commonly used. A definition would be helpful.

Page 6. The second section should be titled “Other approaches to isolate the vas” not others. The same error appears in the first sentence of the following paragraph.
Page 12. Paragraph 2. The 3rd sentence should read, “We were unable…”.

Page 12. Paragraph 4. The 1st sentence should read “…in significant variation…”

Page 12. The abbreviation SA was defined previously, and does not need to be again.

Page 17. Ensure that references are in the correct format.

Page 24. Please define “before-and-after trial”.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Page 4. Cost, acceptability, and regret would be interesting outcomes to add, if possible, though I doubt there are much data.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

None