Reviewer’s report

Title: Inhaled Drugs to Reduce Exacerbations in COPD Patients: a Network Meta-Analysis

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Reviewer: Felix Ram

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Research article
Inhaled Drugs to Reduce Exacerbations in COPD Patients: a Network Meta-Analysis
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This is a well written and presented manuscript. I read the manuscript with great interest as it provides an alternative method for systematic reviewing of RCT’s and data analysis.

The methodology looks sound and the results well presented. Particularly, interesting to read the results for patients with FEV1 < 40%. However, two main issues require consideration.

(1) The study results suggest that ICS are of limited benefit in COPD. This does go against normal recommendations and COPD pathology. We are aware that ICs usual takes much longer to have a clinical effect (particularly on exacerbations) and the authors did not look at time as a factor in their analysis. The studies included vary from 3-36 months. It is important that the authors do analysis based on time. For example studies that were conducted for longer than 12 months duration of which there are 11 included in the review. It would be interesting to see these results.

(2) The search for studies were last done in November 2007, this requires updating.

This is an interesting review and provides some very interesting analysis and reading and will help guide clinical practice. However, the above two issues requiring addressing prior.