Reviewer's report

Title: Efficacy and safety study of electroacupuncture for women with pure stress urinary incontinence: study protocol for a multicentre randomized controlled trial

Version: 3 Date: 29 July 2013

Reviewer: Peter Herbison

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions.

1. I found this article quite difficult to read. It seemed to jump around a bit, make assumptions about what is known and what is not known and so on. I think it needs a bit of reorganisation. If the authors have not read the SPIRIT guidelines I recommend that they do so.

Minor essential revisions

2. The trial is about an intervention for stress urinary incontinence and yet this is never defined. It should be done early on.

3. The authors use the term single-blind, and this term can mean anything. It is better to just say who is blind, as they do later in the article.

4. There is no information about the generation of the randomisation sequence, apart to say that it is block randomised and stratified by centre. At least the blocksize should be mentioned.

5. Nowhere does it say who is going to recruit the participants into the study.

6. The abstract defines the sham acupuncture well but I don't think it clear that the sham needle does not penetrate the skin.

7. In the sample size calculation section the authors use plus/minus but don't say what the number afterwards is. Is it a standard deviation?

8. I cannot replicate the sample size calculation. More detail should be given.

9. There is nothing that says what the formula does.

10. Saying that an intention to treat analysis will be done is separated from what the treatment of missing values will be. And it has information about the comparison of drop out rates in between, which makes it more confusing.

11. At first in the analysis section it says that t-tests will be used for continuous data, but later it says ANCOVA will be used.

12. ANCOVA with baselines as co-variates is used to adjust for baseline imbalance, not for confounding. If there is to be adjustment for confounding the
variables to be adjusted for should be specified a priori.

13. It is the residuals that have to be normally distributed, not the data. If non-parametric analysis is to be used how will this use the baseline values? It is not clear.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

No conflicts of interest