Reviewer's report

Title: Protocol for a systematic review of prognostic factors and prognostic models for the recurrence of venous thromboembolism (VTE) following treatment for a first idiopathic VTE

Version: 4 Date: 14 June 2013

Reviewer: Kerry Dwan

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Overall this is a detailed, well written protocol and I have only a few minor comments.

1. Assessment of study quality – make clear which is Cochrane and which is Hayden et al.

2. Assessment of study quality – it is not clear what you mean by the final sentence in section a, are you assuming all studies with no protocol are high risk of bias. Where does this fit into your list above this?

3. Evidence synthesis – be wary of selective reporting of adjusted versus unadjusted analyses.

4. Evidence synthesis – more detail could be provided on the assessment of heterogeneity.

5. Evidence synthesis – it is usually good practice to state how you will look at the different subgroups i.e. how will length of follow up be split?

6. Evidence synthesis – you state you will perform a sensitivity analysis of study quality earlier and subgroup analysis here.

7. How will you deal with missing data?