Reviewer's report

Title: Efficacy and safety of damage control in experimental animal models of injury: protocol for a systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 1
Date: 15 October 2014

Reviewer: Laura Bonnett

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
None

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Data Synthesis section: Avoid the use of "clustered" as this suggests cluster analysis which is not what you are intending to do. Instead stick to terminology such as "grouped". [Clustered/clusters are mentioned twice within this paragraph]

Discretionary Revisions
1. Within the Methods/Design section of the abstract I would suggest that you additionally mention personal contact with relevant researchers in the field.
2. The background section involves the use of complex medical language. Personally, I would find it beneficial if the language was either toned down, or alternatively, additional descriptions were provided to define the medical terms e.g. Exsanguinating trauma patients (patients who are bleeding heavily).
3. Study Selection, 1st paragraph: Please check whether this sentence makes sense - "Injuries of interest will include those resulting in truncal solid, hollow, and/or vascular organ or extremity vascular trauma."
4. Data Extraction, paragraph 1: I would suggest also testing the design of the form on a random sample of an equal number of RCTs and prospective cohort studies until it is clear that the form captures all relevant information.
5. Data Extraction, paragraph 2: Do you plan to collect information about the nature of the induced injury too? I guess these may be included within the characteristics of the included animals but it would be good to see it spelt out.
6. Statistical Analyses section, paragraph 1: If the heterogeneity is minimal you may need to consider using a fixed effects model (generalised inverse variance method) rather than a random effects model. Therefore, I would suggest that you include relevant text to this effect within the Statistical Analysis section.
7. Statistical Analysis section, paragraph 3: consider providing more information about the trim and fill methods you intend to use, especially a reference for these methods.
8. Discussion, paragraph 1: Please consider re-phrasing the following sentence to improve clarity: "Thus, systematic reviews of these types of studies may be
used to outline which interventions tested in animal models may not effectively translate into clinical trials...

5. Author’s information: Is DJR a surgery resident or a surgeon?
6. Reference 21, should "ppen" be "open"?

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.