Reviewer’s report

Title: Protocol for a Systematic Review and Individual Patient Meta-Analysis of Benefit of So-Called Lung-Protective Ventilation-Settings in Patients Under General Anesthesia for Surgery

Version: 2 Date: 14 November 2013

Reviewer: Dean Langan

Reviewer’s report:

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The section on bias that has now been included in the methods section states “It is expected to obtain at least 90% or more of individuals analyzed in the studies identified in the search strategy to avoid the bias due to selective availability of study data”; are you expecting 90% IPD and bias will be avoided or saying that 90% is needed to avoid bias? I think this could be written more clearly.

2. The middle of surgery time-period is defined as “total time of procedure divided by two”. It’s unlikely that data will contain measures exactly in the middle of surgery. More details needed as to how data will be used for this time-period.

> As described in the “Methods”, we will collect the data measured hourly in the procedure. For example: in a surgery with eight hours the middle of the surgery is the fourth hour.

>> The completeness of data section says “Since some authors may not have recorded ventilatory parameters hourly...”. I think the section needs to say that measures closest to the middle of surgery will be used.

Discretionary Revisions

3. The background section states: “With the use of individual patient data, it will be possible to isolate the real effect of tidal volume from those of PEEP.” This seems like a bold statement, that IPD will have sufficient power. Could the wording be changed to ‘...may be possible...’?

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