Reviewer’s report

Title: General vs. neuraxial anaesthesia in hip fracture patients: A systematic review and metaanalysis

Version: 1 Date: 26 Apr 2017

Reviewer: Iain Moppett

Reviewer's report:

The authors have made sensible revisions to the manuscript. I have a few comments that I hope the authors find helpful.

1) Technically the search was made whenever they re-did it - presumably in the last month or so.

2) It would be helpful for the authors to offer a clinical perspective on their findings. A half-day difference in length of stay - does this matter? Similarly, a reduction in 'in hospital' mortality but no effect on 30-day mortality - what does this mean?

3) Penultimate paragraph - random effects modelling weights by effect size precision (1/SD or similar), not by study size (that is what fixed effects does).

4) I realise I probably sound like a fussy author, but the data for White et al seem a little odd still. First, the authors have used range (Maximum-Minimum)/4 for their estimation of SD. Cochrane suggests this, but also an estimate based on IQR. This would avoid the issue of an SD which is greater than the mean (as given in the manuscript - figure 4).

5) Again, being pedantic (but hopefully helpfully), the White study only includes a small subset of the data for both GA and Spinal groups.
I have recalculated the data for mean / SD / N for White 2016.

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<tr>
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<td>Spinal_count</td>
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</table>

It won't change the results much - by eye the relative weight of the study will increase (see point 3), but the mean difference is similar (0.4 days in favour of spinal).

6) Figure 2 - I am unclear why the authors have chosen to use the data for the anaesthetic techniques without blocks from the White study. a) This is the minority technique in the UK so doesn't represent practice adequately, b) most papers do not describe whether blocks were used, so it is more appropriate to use the whole dataset to be comparable with the other studies. Again, it won't change the overall results much.

I hope these are helpful comments.

Iain Moppett

Nottingham, UK
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

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