Reviewer’s report

Title: Industry sponsorship and publication bias among animal studies evaluating the effects of statins on atherosclerosis and bone outcomes: a meta-analysis

Version: 1 Date: 12 December 2014

Reviewer: Jeremy Howick

Reviewer’s report:

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS

1. The methods used are not clear. The paper is about comparing publication bias in two systematic reviews: one of industry funded trials and one of other trials. This simple point was not quite clear in the abstract or the body of the paper until p9. It is a great design and needs to be made clear for non-specialists in the abstract and the body of the text.

2. A main finding — that non-industry studies yielded greater effect sizes — is counter intuitive and different from similar reviews of clinical studies. The authors do not discuss the potential reasons for the discrepancy between animal and clinical studies in the manuscript. (One reason could be that the authors conducted anomalous reviews, see point 3 below.)

3. The fact that the conclusions are based on just two reviews needs to temper the conclusions. Perhaps they cannot be generalised.

MINOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS

The background section is very interesting, but not concise. I would make it about half as long.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

No competing interests