Reviewer’s report

Title: Ramosetron for the treatment of irritable bowel syndrome with diarrhea: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials

Version: 0 Date: 28 Sep 2016

Reviewer: Sajan Jiv Singh Nagpal

Reviewer's report:

The meta-analysis is done very methodically and systematically. However, I do have concerns regarding the generalizability of the results. The authors correctly point out that the study involves only Japanese patients. Even after that is taken into account, it should be noted that the 4 randomized control trials eventually included are actually just by 2 groups of investigators.

Secondly, meta-analyses are done with the intent of pooling data together to resolve conflicting signals from existing literature. In this case it appears that all the 4 studies included already show consistent benefits of the drug in question, so I am not sure what the authors intend to achieve. In its current form, it only serves the purpose of a useful review article. The only instance among all the Forest plots, where the total risk ratio is different from one of the included studies, is in the case of Total Adverse events, and even in that case, it is not significant. The overall results are expected because of the obviously apparent results of the included RCTs.

Thirdly, due to the difference in the sample size of the component RCTs, a sensitivity analysis should be performed to ensure one of the studies is not having an undue influence on the final relative risk. One way to do this would be to exclude each of the studies at a time and re-analyze the remaining. In this case, I anticipate that although the relative risk might change, the conclusions will be the same.

Lastly, even though the included studies are randomized control trials, the authors have not used a formal scale for study assessment (e.g the Newcastle Ottawa scale) to comment on study quality. The authors have also not commented on the coefficient of agreement between the authors in the section where ’disagreements were resolved by discussion’-Page 6, Line 14.

Overall, although I feel that the study adds somewhat to the existing literature by combining the limited existing literature on Ramisetron, a more appropriate time to do this study would be when we have more (and possibly conflicting) data on Ramisetron

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?
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Yes

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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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