Reviewer’s report

Title: Progesterone in women with arrested premature labor. A report of a randomised clinical trial and updated meta-analysis.

Version: 2 Date: 19 May 2017

Reviewer: Ewoud Schuit

Reviewer’s report:

I appreciate that my concerns have been addressed and I am happy to accept the manuscript for publication in its current form.

I do would like to come back to the issues of the risk bias assessment. I agree that Cochrane's risk of bias interpretation of items is subjective which may lead to high variability across reviewers. I acknowledge that both risk of bias assessments are comparable (Prof Altman was involved in both, with Cochrane's being more recent; "other bias" in Cochrane would allow for ITT assessment) and, indeed, Cochrane doesn't hold monopoly on risk of bias assessment. The advantage of using Cochrane's risk of bias assessment would be that it would be more easy to compare the assessment of risk of bias across reviews / meta-analyses as this type of assessment is more common.

I agree with the authors that the risk of bias assessment in itself is not commonly taken into account in consecutive analyses (e.g. performing sensitivity or subgroup analyses as suggested in the Cochrane Handbook and as the current study did). However, the risk of bias assessment may not necessarily always be representative of study quality, e.g. a very small trial may have a lower risk of bias than a very large open-label trial, while it is debatable whether the smaller (underpowered?) trial is necessarily more valid (less biased?) than the larger trial. In some cases it may be more informative to focus on specific items for subgroup analyses, rather than the overall risk of bias assessment.

I would be happy to provide an example of an obstetrical Cochrane review that used the risk of bias assessment as sensitivity / subgroup analysis, but I am not aware of any such reviews. In one of our previous papers we did perform sensitivity analyses based on blinding status and sample size (Schuit et al. BJOG 2015), though this was not a formal Cochrane review, but we did use Cochrane's risk of bias tool.

To conclude, I'm happy with the decision of the authors to stick to their original risk of bias assessment.

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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