Reviewer's report

Title: Cholelithiasis and the risk of intrahepatic cholangiocarcinoma: a meta-analysis of observational studies

Version: 2
Date: 17 April 2015
Reviewer: Giovanni Brandi

Reviewer's report:

The aim of the study is to synthesize the available evidence on colelithiasis and cholangiocarcinoma. The study is interesting; however, I have some doubt on the comprehensiveness of the literature search.

Major comments
• Methods, Page 5, line 13: “studies with extremely small 14 sample sizes were also excluded”. How much is extremely small? Furthermore, there is no reason to exclude small studies: weights in the metanalysis account for the sample size.
• The authors did not report the confounders considered in each primary study. This should be done.
• There is no mention of a case-control study that could be relevant (Donato et al. Cancer Causes Control. 2001 Dec;12(10):959-64). This study should be included or explicitly excluded.
• Which was the agreement between the reviewers, when selecting publications and extracting data? Please, present the Cohen’s kappa.

Minor comments
• Methods, Page 5, line 13: “Because the incidence of hepatocellular carcinoma”. I though that the authors were studying cholangiocarcinoma…
• Methods, Page 5, line 18: “Two specially trained reviewers”. What’s a specially trained reviewer?
• Methods, Page 6, line 12: “I2 ³ 50% was considered to indicate significant heterogeneity”. The usual threshold is 70%. Why the authors used 50%?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests