Reviewer’s report

Title: Racecadotril in the treatment of acute diarrhea in children: a systematic, comprehensive review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials

Version: 0 Date: 18 Oct 2017

Reviewer: Morris Gordon

Reviewer's report:
Having already reviewed this piece for another journal, I am familiar with it. It does not appear to have changed extensively since this review I completed in February 2017.

My major concern is the mismatch between the title / goal and the actual work. The paper claims to be a comprehensive systematic review of RCTs and the abstract seems to suggest that this rigour is how they explain the huge number of studies that previous high quality systematic reviews (which I have published) and the in progress Cochrane review (which I am also authoring) have not identified all these trials.

This is clearly not the reality - the section on RCTs is appropriate to some degree (although I note studies where there were significant concerns previously have been included) - this raises the question of detailed quality assessment which is not fully addressed.

The main issue is the bulk of papers which are not RCTs. Instead this a comprehensive review of all research on Racecadotril. That is fine, but not what the authors state they will do. More importantly, the methods used to quality assess, analyse and synthesise such different works are diverse and complex and I see no evidence of these. Instead, this is a narrative review and should be rewritten and refocused as that.

I think the authors need to decide if this is the direction they want to go and then recruit the appropriate epidemiological support in rewriting the paper, which would then be a valuable contribution to the literature.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.
No

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

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

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.
Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:
Acceptable

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I have reviewed this manuscript already for another journal and advised major revision or reject - the manuscript does not appear to have changed in any meaningful way since then so clearly I have a bias entering this review.

I have also had travel grants to attend scientific meetings from companies that distribute this drug - they have had no involvement in any of my works.

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