Reviewer’s report

Title: The role of tonsillectomy in the Periodic Fever, Aphthous stomatitis, Pharyngitis and cervical Adenitis syndrome; a literature review

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Reviewer: Michael Hofer

Reviewer’s report:

This is an interesting paper reviewing the evidences in favour of TE/ATE as treatment for PFAPA syndrome. The authors reviewed the literature and analysed the publications according to a quality score, proposed by them. Compared to the recent Cochrane analysis, the authors add a systematic review of all published case series.

It is still not clear for me what is the real added value of this article as compared to the Cochrane review. I understand that case series were added and that the number of patients is higher, but the quality of most of these studies is low. I am not convinced that adding low quality articles may improve the evidence, nor help the clinician in his therapeutic choice. In the results, I would show the results of the high quality studies separately. The authors should clearly discuss what is new in their article in terms of conclusion drawn by the data.

The authors wrote in the methods: "High quality study should have included patients according to definitions by Marshall or Thomas”. In the Renko study, many patients did not fulfill the criteria. I would discuss this point and not only refer to both RCTs. Please explain the rational of limiting the high quality case series to both above definitions.

In the background, the problem with accurate PFAPA diagnosis should be discussed and what is the difference between Marshall and Thomas criteria. Retrospective diagnosis is compatible with high quality in the evaluation of article quality if both other conditions are present; I would not consider as high quality a study using retrospective diagnosis, in particular because I do not see how the removal of the tonsils would facilitate the diagnosis.

Another problem is the comparison between ATE and TE; this should be mentioned in the table. What was the rational of ATE in PFAPA patients?

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.

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
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Acceptable

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