Reviewer's report

Title: Signs and symptoms associated with primary tooth eruption. A clinical study of nonpharmacological remedies

Version: 1 Date: 30 January 2015

Reviewer: Nicola Innes

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the invitation to review this interesting observational study. Generally, the methodology seems appropriate although it seems unclear why the authors have not reported this as a randomised control trial. Some additional detail in some areas would help clarification (I have detailed these below). I believe that this study will be of wide interest to paediatric dentists, general dentists and possibly medical practitioners, not to mention parents!

Major Compulsory Revisions:
• The manuscript doesn’t comply with the standard of reporting and it should be re-written to comply with the CONSORT guidelines. These can be found at: http://www.equator-network.org/
• There needs to be a table with baseline characteristics to show the groupings of participants following randomisation.
• Line 130 – 139 Please explain exactly the sequence of events including what the initial signs of tooth eruption were. There should be clear information on how parents were able to collect data 4 days before tooth eruption – I can’t figure out how they would know that the tooth was going to erupt in 4 days time?

Other areas for clarification and additional recommendations/ comments:
• Change the title to fit in with Consort guidelines
• Primary and secondary outcomes should be clearly stated
• A power calculation needs to be discussed and how the number of children entered were chosen.
• Line 158 - what was the order of selection and randomisation regarding the children who had started to eat solid foods? Did having to place children with this characteristic (and possibly with an age bias) affect randomisation?
• Separate out how the children were selected and the randomisation process
• Line 93 – why is there no name of city?
• Line 91 – the Ethics approval isn’t clear – why is it blank?
• A CONSORT flow chart will help clarify process and order of events
• Line 184 and 189 – what was the range of ages?
• Line 193 – “Most” – how many?
• Tables 1, 3 and 4. I suggest separate columns for the % values to make the
table easier to read – the % sign can then go in the heading.
• Figure 1 would benefit from more information. How about the max and min values and s.d. Can these be added to the graph? Or something to show the variance?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'