Reviewed by: Amie Steel

**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** Reliability of diagnosis and clinical efficacy of visceral osteopathy: a systematic review

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 19 Dec 2017

**Reviewer:** Amie Steel

**Reviewer’s report:**

**Abstract:**

Line 4-5: This sentence seems needlessly emotive. What something "seems" is not relevant.

Line 12-15: The actual study designs included in the review is not clear. Possibly because the authors have chosen to write in passive language here? Please redraft for clarity.

**Methods**

P6, Line 4-5: Consisted "of" not "in"

P6, Line 13-15: As the benefit of the doubt was given to studies where the inclusion of visceral osteopathy was unclear, was there any analysis of the impact of unclear studies in the final conclusion? i.e. did the results of these questionable studies affect the final trends reported from the review?

**Results**

In line with AMSTAR guidelines, please justify exclusion of any articles which underwent full text examination/data extraction and were subsequently excluded.

P13, Line 9-11: What type of blinding are you referring to here? It is not possible for a diagnostician to be blinded to whether they are using the technique, so I assume you refer to blinding of the patient's health status? Or something else? Please clarify

Considering the high degree of bias identified, the outcomes of the paper - whether positive, negative, or neutral - can not be confirmed. This needs to be more explicitly stated in the manuscript.

P19, Line 17-21: Please provide references to justify the statement "Given that the different biases...should lead to an artificially increased measured reliability".

**Discussion:**
The presentation of the included papers which constitutes the first part of the Discussion should actually be in the results. This holds for most of Page 20. The Discussion is for interpretation of the results in the broader context of the topic area. This has not been very effectively done as evidenced by the absence of references to papers not included in the review itself.

The use of dot points as paragraphs is not appropriate to scientific style writing. Suggest reformatting to align with the journal style.

**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?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

**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.

I am able to assess the statistics

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

Acceptable

**Declaration of competing interests**
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

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If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

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