Reviewer's report

**Title:** Exercise for patients with depression: a protocol for a systematic review with meta-analysis and trial sequential analysis

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 20 September 2014

**Reviewer:** Robert Stanton

**Reviewer’s report:**

**General comments:**
This is a timely and useful topic. The investigation of harmful effects will be an important inclusion.

**Minor essential revisions**
1. There are some grammatical errors and the use of both past, present and future tense. I would expect the methods would all be future tense since this is a protocol for a study yet to be conducted.

2. The authors should define the use of ‘light exercise’ as an attention control, eg stretching, yoga or Tai Chi, since that latter 2 have been found to reduce depressive symptoms.

**Discretionary revisions**
1. Background: Second last line. What are ‘health authorities’ and is this a comparison group in your review?

2. You name the 2 investigators who will likely perform data extraction but not those who will perform trial identification

3. There are no language restrictions therefore I assume the research team has, or has access to the requisite language skills.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

There are no competing interests