Reviewer's report

Title: Adherence to Brain Trauma Foundation guidelines for management of traumatic brain injury patients: study protocol for a systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 4 Date: 3 August 2015

Reviewer: Kehu Yang

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The research is significant to this field. But the manuscript should be completely revised for the questions raised by the reviewers last time.

Major comments and suggestions

1. The outcomes reported in the section of Objective should be removed and added to the Outcome in the section of Selection criteria.

2. In the section of Selection criteria, the first three sub-sections, including Population, Outcome and Study design were the criteria of included studies. However, the criteria were described again in the fifth sub-section named Study selection. The authors should remove the criteria in the Study selection and integrate them into the first three sub-sections.

3. The including criteria and excluding criteria are not opposite. When screening the records, we only exclude the studies with special characteristics from the included studies. Thus, the two criteria, “animal studies” and “case reports”, should be removed in the section of Study selection. Because according to the including criteria, we will include the original researches, like RCT, cohort study, etc. which focus on the adherence of BTF guidelines about inpatients with BTF. So there is no animal study or case report that can be excluded from the included studies.

4. The descriptions about the patients and BTF guidelines are repetitive. They should be integrated into the first sub-section, Population in the Selection criteria.

5. In the section of Quality assessment, the authors reported “We will assess the quality of reporting using a checklist, which will be based on the TREND (Transparent Reporting of Evaluations with Nonrandomized Designs) statement to assess the reporting of interventional studies”. There may be a little bit error. In this paragraph, the authors want to assess the risk of bias of RCT. So the correct instrument used to assess the quality of reporting is CONSORT Statement. Meanwhile, what we make the quality assessment is to make clear there is any risk of bias during the conduction and performance of included studies which would influence the confidence of the results. So quality assessment of reporting of included studies may not be important for systematic review.