Reviewer’s report

Title: Effectiveness of Interventions during NICU Hospitalization on the Neurodevelopment of Preterm Infants: A Systematic Review Protocol

Version: 0 Date: 09 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Stephanie Scott

Reviewer's report:

Overall, this is a well written protocol and I enjoyed reading the manuscript. However, I some concerns that I think the authors need to address in order to progress the protocol to publication:

1. Background: Could the authors reflect specifically on how they know that there are no existing or ongoing reviews in this topic area - have they performed scoping searches?

2. Methods: Whilst I agree with inclusion/exclusion decisions, it would be helpful if the authors could include their rationale for these decisions, for example:
   * Exclusion of certain study designs, such as case control and quasi-experimental with no randomisation procedure.
   * Only including studies 2001-2016.
   * Exclusion of infants with major brain abnormalities.

3. Methods: Could the authors provide some firm examples of outcomes of interest that they'd expect to see? Are there any secondary outcomes of interest?

4. Methods: Will MESH/thesaurus terms be used as well as key words?

5. Methods: Could the authors include a provisional search strategy for one database, such as MEDLINE? This would be helpful to see.

6. Outcomes: there is repetition relating to this hence my question about whether there are any secondary outcomes. I see later in the paper that these are outlined. Could the authors consider outlining outcomes (primary then secondary) only once? As per my earlier query, it would be good to see concrete examples of expected variables.

7. Discussion: can the authors reflect on wider use of findings of this review? Reflecting that they will be published in a scientific journal to add to body of knowledge does not seem substantial enough. In terms of policy and practice (and implementation of interventions in NICU), what does the review provide?
Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

Needs some language corrections before being published

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?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

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.

'I declare that I have no competing interests'

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal