Reviewer's report

**Title:** Prevalence and prognosis of acutely ill patients with organ failure at arrival to hospital: Protocol for a systematic review

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 27 May 2017

**Reviewer:** Jennifer Watt

**Reviewer's report:**

This manuscript is a protocol describing an approach to systematically reviewing the literature to ascertain the prevalence and prognosis of acutely ill patients with organ failure who present to hospital. This is an important topic and a systematic review in this area will be helpful for readers. There are some methodological points that should be clarified to strengthen this protocol:

Major Concerns:

1. Is a second information scientist going to peer review the search strategy (e.g. using the PRESS checklist)?

2. Are you going to limit your search to a specific time period (e.g. from 1995 onward)?

3. Are you going to include the grey literature in your search strategy?

4. Why is only one author going to conduct screening of titles and abstracts?

5. Are you going to do a calibration exercise prior to full-text screening to ensure good agreement between reviewers?

6. If there are randomized controlled trials included in your systematic review, what critical appraisal tool will be used?

7. Will the final decision to conduct meta-analyses be based on clinical, methodological, or statistical heterogeneity? Or all three sources of heterogeneity?
8. You mention in the abstract that random-effects meta-analyses will be used to pool effect estimates, but this is not stated in the data synthesis section of the manuscript. It will be helpful to further describe the possible methods that you will use to conduct meta-analyses.

Minor Concerns:

1. The manuscript would be strengthened by having an English copy writer review the manuscript for spelling and grammatical errors.

2. Consider using the term delirium as opposed to cerebral failure. Readers will likely be more familiar with the term delirium.

3. In the methods section of the abstract, please ensure it is clear that two authors will be conducting full-text article screening.

4. In the outcomes and prioritization section, consider adding an additional sentence that clarifies how your secondary outcomes will be operationalized (e.g. "If a patient develops organ failure, what is the relative risk of transfer to the ICU and/or 30-day or 1-year all-cause mortality?")

**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
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