Reviewer’s report

Title: Instrument-based Tests for Measuring Anterior Chamber Cells in Uveitis: A Systematic Review Protocol

Version: 0 Date: 09 Sep 2018

Reviewer: Efthymia Prousali

Reviewer’s report:

Many thanks for sending me this paper, which seeks to investigate the available instrument-based technologies for measuring anterior chamber cells in uveitis.

I will start with some general comments and methodological and more minor issues will follow.

The study is likely to make an original contribution, by pulling available evidence on ophthalmic imaging techniques that could provide more reliable measures of ocular inflammation compared to the SUN grading scheme. The study protocol has also been registered in the PROSPERO database.

There are a number of methodological issues identified:

P8, lines 2-3: Although authors mention the word 'Appendix' in the manuscript, MEDLINE search strategy is presented in P19 in a table. Authors could submit the search strategy as 'Appendix 1' in a supplementary file, instead.

P9, 'Selection criteria': In order to maintain transparency of the review process, the key components of the review question should be set out using the rule PICOT, as described in PRISMA-P checklist and preferably with the following order: 'population', 'index test', 'comparator/reference standard', 'outcome/target condition', 'type of study'. Authors should also specify whether they plan to prioritise their outcomes, i.e. by defining primary or secondary outcomes.

P9, 'Study designs': The authors state that they will analyse cross-sectional studies. What do they plan to do with relevant case-control studies, particularly when the control group is part of the suspected population?

P10, 'Selection process' & 'Data extraction': The software should be added.

P12, lines 17-20: If the authors plan to include longitudinal studies, this should be stated under the 'Study design' section, instead.
P14, 'Minimising Bias': It is unusual for a protocol to have a subsection entitled 'minimising bias'. Authors should preferably specify that two independent reviewers will perform each step under the relevant sections, and remove this paragraph.

P15, lines 35-37, 58/P16, lines 1-3: Authors state that they will not perform subgroup analyses based on age, gender etc. Notwithstanding, they also report that subgroup analyses may be considered if permitted by data. It should be specified whether they plan to perform a subgroup analysis or not, and one of the two sentences should be removed, accordingly.

P18: The following listed abbreviations 'CINAHL', 'NEI-FDA-', 'ROBINS-I' are found nowhere in the manuscript.

P19, MEDLINE search strategy: Preferably submit search strategy as 'Appendix 1'.

PRISMA-P checklist: Authors do not mention whether they plan to perform quality assessment of the body of evidence, i.e. using GRADE.

Minor comments:

P2, Abstract: Please add grey literature in your searches.

P7, 'Design': please replace 'design', which is often used for 'study design' under PICOT format, with 'protocol'.

P14, line 45: Please use 'data synthesis' instead.

P16, 'Reporting': This sentence should preferably be incorporated under 'Protocol' section in P8.

P16, 'Discussion and potential impact': Preferably change to 'Discussion'.

P22, line 39: Reference 7 needs to be more fully cited.

P22, lines 45-52: References 8-9 represent the same study cited twice.

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