Reviewer’s report

Title: Influence of adjuvant antibiotics on fistula formation following incision and drainage of anorectal abscesses: A systematic review protocol

Version: 0 Date: 17 Oct 2018

Reviewer: Justin Conrad Rosen Wormald

Reviewer's report:

This is a very well designed systematic review protocol assessing the use of antibiotics for a common general surgical condition and therefore is highly relevant in terms of antibiotic stewardship. There are a few minor amendments and suggested additions that should be considered before publication.

Abstract:

The first sentence of the abstract doesn't make sense - in a third of which patients?

Otherwise abstract reads well. PROSPERO registration noted and confirmed to be correct.

Keywords:

Only 'fistula' is correct - the others are not keywords and need to be amended

Introduction:

Grammatical errors such as: 'Perianal fistula formation following drainage of anorectal abscesses are is common…' are multiple in the introduction - please check and amend

Well referenced with mostly up to date references (is there a more up to date reference for Hamalainen, K.P. and A.P. Sainio, Incidence of fistulas after drainage of acute anorectal 321 abscesses. Dis Colon Rectum, 1998?)

Could the authors add a sentence on the proposed mechanism by which antibiotics might prevent fistula formation?

Objectives:

The authors should state that an evaluation of the quality/strength of the evidence supporting the intervention is an objective

Methods:
Sound methodology generally.

Outcomes: will there be any specific timepoints at which the primary outcome will be assessed? 6 months/ 12 months? 5 years etc?

Strong search strategy and data extraction plan.

Risk of Bias strategy is acceptable.


Discussion

Briefly lays out potential difficulties - the authors should detail likely biases that will be encountered and how they will deal with them (i.e. how will they interpret data from RCTs vs. n=5 case series) and how they will deal with the likely heterogeneity of the interventions (IV vs. oral, antibiotic class, dressing types) and how they will deal with potential confounders.

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field that should be highlighted to relevant networks

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

Acceptable

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None

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