Reviewer’s report

Title: Oral nutritional supplements for preventing surgical site infections: Protocol for a systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 0 Date: 28 Oct 2019

Reviewer: Sylvine Carrondo Cottin

Reviewer's report:

This review is of particular interest as surgical-related infections are a huge problem for patients and healthcare systems.

Globally, the content of this protocol needs to be more structured as it is difficult to read. Particularly the method section.

- Abstract acceptable.

No record has been found in PROSPERO using the record number nor the title of the review. The author should clarify as this is a requirement for the journal.

- Background

Line 78: Low or high BMI is a surgical risk factor?

Lines 100-107: The authors should cite ESPEN Guidelines on Clinical nutrition in surgery (2017) for more relevance.

- Methods\design

Authors should add subtitles to structure the method section.

Line 157: Specify which hospital settings will be included (private, public only...)

Line 202: What is the rationale for a follow-up of 52 weeks, as deep incisional and organ/space SSI are defined by the CDC as occurring within 30 or 90 days after the surgical procedure

Line 204: The primary outcome is not well defined, what is the variable measured? See lines 209-210 "the proportion of patients who developed any SSIs before or after discharge from hospital within 30 days following surgery"

Line 212-213: "We will report any reported incident of SSIs that falls under these definitions as one outcome." Do you mean as one event, as one patient with a SSI ? Clarify

Line 221: The cost effectiveness outcome should be developed. What data will be collected?
Lines 294-311: Clarify this paragraph, maybe group the sections about cluster studies.

Line 313: Which method will be used to combine odd ratios?

Line 377-379: No need to define funnel plots

- Discussion

The content of the discussion is not appropriate, this looks more like a complement of the method section.

The discussion should explain expected benefits of the review, limitations and eventually additional analyses.

**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:

Acceptable

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No