Reviewer’s report

Title: Relationship between volume and outcome for gastroschisis: a systematic review protocol

Version: 0  Date: 26 Jul 2020

Reviewer: Ferrán Catalá-López

Reviewer's report:

Overall, this is an interesting and well-written manuscript of a study protocol for a systematic review on the relationship between volume and outcome for gastroschisis. Although the planned methods are credible - and remarkably similar to those reported in a previously published study protocol examining (surgical) volume and congenital diaphragmatic hernia [ref. 42] - I think that some reporting aspects could be improved. I have the following minor comments which may be useful for the authors, and potential readers.

General comment
To clarify, PRISMA/PRISMA-P/SWiM are reporting guidelines, not guidelines for "designing", "developing" or "conducting" reviews. Please, revise the abstract and main text.

Specific comments

Abstract
Page 3. Methods. Lines 60-61. Please, delete "This systematic review protocol has been designed according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis Protocol".
Page 3. Methods. Line 62. Please, include planned coverage limits (e.g. "from inception onwards"). For example: "(...) a systematic literature search (from inception onwards) in MEDLINE, EMBASE, CENTRAL, (...)".
Page 3. Methods. Lines 64-66. Please, delete: "We will screen titles and abstracts of retrieved studies, obtain potentially relevant full texts and assess the eligibility of those full texts against our inclusion criteria.". This information is already reported in line 70 (e.g. "Title and abstract screening, full text screening (...) will be conducted by two reviewers independently").
Page 3. Methods. Line 66. The authors' state: "We will include comparative studies (...)". Could you please be more explicit? For example: "We will include comparative studies (e.g. randomised controlled trials, non-randomised controlled trials, and observational studies) (...)".
Page 3. Methods. Line 67. Could you please list the main outcomes for which data will be sought, including prioritization of primary and secondary outcomes, if appropriate. For example: "The primary outcomes will be survival and mortality. Secondary outcomes will be [please, include some examples]".
Background.
Page 5. Lines 86-90. This paragraph was "recycled" from ref. 43. Please, revise. I think it could be deleted, or included/ revised in p.7 if necessary.

Methods
Page 8. Lines 153-158. The authors' state: "The protocol follows (...) [PRISMA-P]". Please, revise as follows: "This protocol is reported in accordance with the reporting guidance provided in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Protocols (PRISMA-P) statement [41] (see checklist in Additional file 1). The present protocol has been registered within the Open Science Framework platform (registration numbers: osf.io/ex34m; osf.io/hgpz2OSF.IO). Planned methods will be in line with those reported in our systematic review on the relationship between volume and outcomes for congenital diaphragmatic hernia [42, 43]."

Page 8. Line 175. Eligibility criteria (Patients). The authors' state: "(...) the subject of the study is gastroschisis; (...). Could you be more explicit? For example: "Patients: We will include studies involving children and adults with gastroschisis"? Only children?). Could you please include diagnostic codes of gastroschisis (e.g. ICD-10, ICD-11?). Please revise/clarify.

Page 8. Line 176. Eligibility criteria (Study design). The authors' state: "(...) the study has a comparative design, we expect to include mostly observational studies, however, if available we will also include subgroup analyses of experimental study designs (e.g. RCTs); (...). Could please be more explicit on study characteristics/design? For example: "Study design: We will include comparative studies, such as randomised controlled trials, non-randomised trials and observational studies (e.g. cohort studies, interrupted time series)" Please, revise/clarify. Note: information on subgroup analyses should be included in Data synthesis subsection, not in "Eligibility criteria". Thank you.

Page 8. Line 178. Eligibility criteria (Outcomes). The authors' state: "clinical outcomes (e.g. mortality, morbidity) are studied (see "outcomes and priorisation")". Could you please be more explicit?

Page 9. Line 179. Eligibility criteria (Exposure). The authors' state: "volume is assessed as a categorical variable or a continuous variable". Could you please describe the concept of "volume"? Please refer this should be the "exposure". Thank you.

Page 9. Line 180. Eligibility criteria (Context?). The authors' state: "the study describes more than one hospital or surgeon". Should this refer as context/setting? Please, clarify.

Page 11. Line 229. Please, rename as "Risk of bias in individual studies".

Page 11. Line 230-240. Could you please describe other anticipated methods/tools for assessing risk of bias of individual studies (as per your eligibility criteria such as RoB 2.0 for randomised trials? Any other tool for observational studies?) Please, clarify.

Page 11. Line 246-247. The authors' state: "The synthesis will follow the reporting guideline for synthesis without meta-analysis (SWiM) [50]." Please, revise as follows: "We will report our planned synthesis according to the Synthesis Without Meta-analysis (SWiM) guideline [ref]".

Page 12. Lines 266-267. The authors' state: "The systematic review will be conducted according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) [54]." Please, delete/revise as follows: "The proposed systematic review will be reported in accordance with the reporting guidance provided in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) statement [54]. Any amendments made to this protocol when conducting the study will be outlined and reported in the final manuscript."
Discussion
Pages 13. Please, include brief discussion of any practical or operational issues involved in performing the study you anticipate and any issues not covered in other sections, if appropriate.
Pages 13. Please, discuss potential limitations at single study level, and at review level you anticipate.
Pages 13. Please, discuss dissemination plans (e.g. publication in peer-reviewed journals, conferences, interactions with potential knowledge users, ...). For example: "Results will be disseminated through conference presentations and publication in a peer-reviewed journal."

Additional files
Please, revise additional files considering all the above (if necessary). Thank you.

Publons Reviewer Recognition. Springer Nature can send verification of this review directly to Publons (a subsidiary of Clarivate Analytics). If you would like to take advantage of this service, please click on the “Yes” option below. Your name, email address, title of the reviewed manuscript, name of the journal, and date of your review submission (the “Review Data”) will then be transmitted to Publons upon publication of the manuscript. If you have already registered at Publons, they will notify you of the receipt of this review and update your profile as per your settings and their policy. If you are not registered with Publons, you will receive an email from them asking you to register in order for them to be able to recognize your review on your new profile page. Publons may use the Review Data to generate derivative metadata for the benefit of Publons and you as a reviewer, carefully considering the sensitivity of such information. For example, Publons may verify your record as a reviewer by updating your profile published on its webservice if you have registered for such service or help editors to identify candidate reviewers. Please find the details of processing in Publons’ privacy policy https://publons.com/about/terms

Yes

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

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

Were you mentored through this peer review?

No