

## PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form (<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/site/about/resources/checklist.pdf>) and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below. Some articles will have been accepted based in part or entirely on reviews undertaken for other BMJ Group journals. These will be reproduced where possible.

### ARTICLE DETAILS

<b>TITLE (PROVISIONAL)</b>	Non-pharmacological treatments for adult patients with functional constipation: a systematic review protocol
<b>AUTHORS</b>	Chen, Min; Zheng, Hui; Li, Juan; Huang, Dequan; Chen, Qin; Fang, Jianqiao

### VERSION 1 - REVIEW

<b>REVIEWER</b>	Zhishun Liu Professor , Dean of Acupuncture Department of Guang An Men Hospital,China Academy of Chinese Medicine Sciences,Beijing, China
<b>REVIEW RETURNED</b>	06-Mar-2014

<b>GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	1.The improvement of bowel movements per week after finishing all treatment sessions is not proper.The mean weekly spontaneous bowel movements or completely spontaneous bowel movements is better. 2.The time frame is not stated clearly.Is that the last week of treatment session or first week afterfinishing all treatment sessions ? 3.Non-pharmacological thearapies include a lot different thearapies.Are these thearapies meta-analysed one by one or as a whole?
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<b>REVIEWER</b>	Bian zhaoxiang School of Chinese medicine Hong Kong Baptist University
<b>REVIEW RETURNED</b>	19-Mar-2014

- The reviewer completed the checklist but made no further comments.

<b>REVIEWER</b>	Maxine Duke Deakin University Victoria Australia
<b>REVIEW RETURNED</b>	05-May-2014

<b>GENERAL COMMENTS</b>	I am confused as to whether this systematic review has been conducted and this is the protocol or whether this is the proposed protocol for a systematic review. The use of future and past tense adds to this confusion. It is not clear what the value of a protocol that has yet to be tested has for the readership. Many areas such as how missing data will be dealt are equivocal and outcome unknown.
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	<p>The strengths and weaknesses section is not well done and appears to present a circular argument.</p> <p>The review has also missed a previous systematic review in this area 9. Lin, L-W, Yuan-Tsung Fu, M.S., Dunning, T, Lin Zhang,A, Ho, Tien-Hui, Duke,M. &amp; Sing Kai Lo (2009) Efficacy of Traditional Chinese Medicine for the Management of Constipation; A Systematic Review. The Journal of Alternative and complementary Medicine Vol 15. Number 12, 2009 pp 1335-1346. Impact factor 1.585. h index H index 48</p>
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### VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer: 1

Reviewer Name Zhishun Liu

Institution and Country Professor , Dean of Acupuncture Department of Guang An Men Hospital,China Academy of Chinese Medicine Sciences,Beijing, China

Please state any competing interests or state 'None declared': I've no competing interests with the authors.

1.The improvement of bowel movements per week after finishing all treatment sessions is not proper.The mean weekly spontaneous bowel movements or completely spontaneous bowel movements is better.

Response: We selected the The mean weekly spontaneous bowel movements as suggested, see page 4.

2.The time frame is not stated clearly.Is that the last week of treatment session or first week afterfinishing all treatment sessions ?

Response: We selected the first week after finishing all treatment sessions, see page 4.

3.Non-pharmacological thearapies include a lot different thearapies. Are these thearapies meta-analysed one by one or as a whole?

Response: We explain this in the subgroup analysis session, see page 6.

Reviewer: 2

Reviewer Name Bian zhaoxiang

Institution and Country School of Chinese medicine

Hong Kong Baptist University

Please state any competing interests or state 'None declared': None Declared

There are no comments.

Reviewer: 3

Reviewer Name Maxine Duke

Institution and Country Deakin University

Victoria

Australia

Please state any competing interests or state 'None declared': None declared

I am confused as to whether this systematic review has been conducted and this is the protocol or whether this is the proposed protocol for a systematic review. The use of future and past tense adds to this confusion.

Response: This is an ongoing systematic review, so some of the works were finished like pre-search

of the potential studies for understanding of recent research on this topic. We run a thorough review of the article and made changes to clear the confusion.

It is not clear what the value of a protocol that has yet to be tested has for the readership.

Response: In our opinion, the value of this protocol is that readers could find out the limitations of the protocol and make suggestions, so that we would not present results with bias, so that we would have the opportunity to revise the final review before publishing its results.

Many areas such as how missing data will be dealt are equivocal and outcome unknown.

Response: We made changes and describe the reason for how we deal with the missing data in discussion section. See page 7.

The strengths and weaknesses section is not well done and appears to present a circular argument.

Response: We revised the discussion, see page 7.

The review has also missed a previous systematic review in this area 9. Lin, L-W, Yuan-Tsung Fu, M.S., Dunning, T, Lin Zhang, A, Ho, Tien-Hui, Duke, M. & Sing Kai Lo (2009) Efficacy of Traditional Chinese Medicine for the Management of Constipation; A Systematic Review. The Journal of Alternative and complementary Medicine Vol 15. Number 12, 2009 pp 1335-1346. Impact factor 1.585. h index H index 48

Response: We mentioned this in Introduction section, page 3, reference 12.