

**Supplementary Table 1.** Details of GRADE

No. of studies	Quality assessment						No. of patients		Effect		Quality	Importance
	Design	Risk of bias	Inconsistency	Indirectness	Imprecision	Other considerations	ESPB	Control	Relative risk (95% CI)	Absolute		
Cumulative postoperative intravenous (I.V.) morphine equivalent consumption (mg) (measured with: Better indicated by lower values)												
8	Randomised trials	No serious risk of bias	No serious inconsistency	No serious indirectness	No serious imprecision	Reporting bias <sup>1</sup>	238	238	-	Mean 0 higher (0 to 0 higher)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ MODERATE	CRITICAL
Pain scores at rest (Better indicated by lower values)												
6	Randomised trials	No serious risk of bias	No serious inconsistency	No serious indirectness	No serious imprecision	Reporting bias <sup>1</sup>	180	180	-	MD 0 higher (0 to 0 higher)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ MODERATE	CRITICAL
Pain scores at movement (Better indicated by lower values)												
7	Randomised trials	No serious risk of bias	No serious inconsistency	No serious indirectness	No serious imprecision	Reporting bias <sup>1</sup>	208	208	-	MD 0 higher (0 to 0 higher)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ MODERATE	CRITICAL
Overall pain scores (Better indicated by lower values)												
7	Randomised trials	No serious risk of bias	No serious inconsistency	No serious indirectness	No serious imprecision	Reporting bias <sup>1</sup>	188	188	-	MD 0 higher (0 to 0 higher)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ MODERATE	CRITICAL
Cumulative intraoperative intravenous morphine equivalent consumption (mg) (measured with: Better indicated by lower values)												
7	Randomised trials	No serious risk of bias	No serious inconsistency	No serious indirectness	No serious imprecision	Reporting bias <sup>1</sup>	238	238	-	Mean 9.63 lower (15.4 to 3.86 lower)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ MODERATE	IMPORTANT
Time to first rescue analgesic (Better indicated by lower values)												
5	Randomised trials	No serious risk of bias	No serious inconsistency	No serious indirectness	No serious imprecision	None	148	148	-	MD 6.15 higher (2.19 to 10.12 higher)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ HIGH	IMPORTANT
Number of patients requiring rescue analgesia (n)												
7	Randomised trials	No serious risk of bias	No serious inconsistency	No serious indirectness	No serious imprecision	None	58/198 (29.3%)	131/198 (66.2%)	RR 0.39 (0.72 to 1.03)	40 fewer per 100 (from 19 fewer to 2 more)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ HIGH	IMPORTANT
Urinary retention												
2	Randomised trials	Serious <sup>2</sup>	No serious inconsistency	No serious indirectness	No serious imprecision	Reporting bias <sup>1</sup>	2/50 (4%)	4/50 (8%)	RR 0.5 (0.1 to 2.6)	4 fewer per 100 (from 7 fewer to 13 more)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ LOW	IMPORTANT
Postoperative nausea and vomiting												
9	Randomised trials	No serious risk of bias	No serious inconsistency	No serious indirectness	No serious imprecision	None	45/258 (17.4%)	88/258 (34.1%)	RR 0.54 (0.36 to 0.83)	16 fewer per 100 (from 6 fewer to 22 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ HIGH	IMPORTANT
Itching												
5	Randomised trials	No serious risk of bias	No serious inconsistency	No serious indirectness	Serious <sup>3</sup>	None	14/150 (9.3%)	25/150 (16.7%)	RR 0.58 (0.25 to 1.35)	7 fewer per 100 (from 13 fewer to 6 more)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ MODERATE	NOT IMPORTANT
Length of hospital stay (d) (Better indicated by lower values)												
5	Randomised trials	Serious <sup>2</sup>	No serious inconsistency	No serious indirectness	No serious imprecision	Reporting bias <sup>1</sup>	158	158	-	MD 1.04 lower (0 to 0.15 higher)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ LOW	IMPORTANT
Frist time of ambulation (d) (Better indicated by lower values)												
3	Randomised trials	Serious <sup>2</sup>	No serious inconsistency	No serious indirectness	No serious imprecision	Reporting bias <sup>1</sup>	90	90	-	MD 0.93 lower (1.97 lower to 0.07 higher)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ LOW	IMPORTANT

<sup>1</sup>There is publication bias.

<sup>2</sup>There is bias.

<sup>3</sup>Observations may be inaccurate.

CI: confidence interval.