Table 56: Clinical evidence profile: Steroid (IT) versus steroid (oral) [IT prednisolone, methylprednisolone or dexamethasone versus oral prednisolone]

Quality assessment							No of patients		Effect		Quality	Importance
No of studies	Design	Risk of bias	Inconsistency	Indirectness	Imprecision	Other considerations	IT	Oral steroid	Relative (95% CI)	Absolute		
PTA improvement (follow-up 3 weeks - 6 months; Better indicated by higher values)												
5	randomised trials	very serious[1]	serious[2]	no serious indirectness	no serious imprecision	none	213	204	-	MD 1.19 higher (3.41 lower to 5.78 higher)	⊕OOO VERY LOW	CRITICAL
Recovery (follow-up 17-60 days)												
2	randomised trials	very serious[1]	no serious inconsistency	no serious indirectness	very serious[3]	none	8/40 (20%)	24.1%	RR 0.84 (0.37 to 1.91)	39 fewer per 1000 (from 152 fewer to 219 more)	⊕OOO VERY LOW	CRITICAL
Word recognition score improvement - 2 months (follow-up 2 months; Better indicated by lower values)												

1	randomised trials	serious[1]	no serious inconsistency	no serious indirectness	no serious imprecision	none	129	121	-	MD 0.4 lower (8.8 lower to 8 higher)	⊕⊕⊕O MODERATE	CRITICAL
Word recognition score improvement - 6 months (follow-up 6 months; Better indicated by lower values)												
1	randomised trials	very serious[1]	no serious inconsistency	no serious indirectness	no serious imprecision	none	129	121	-	MD 0.6 lower (9.29 lower to 8.09 higher)	⊕⊕OO LOW	CRITICAL
Patients with adverse events (follow-up 2-6 months)												
2	randomised trials	no serious risk of bias	no serious inconsistency	no serious indirectness	no serious imprecision	none	116/129 (89.9%)	87.6%	RR 1.03 (0.94 to 1.12)	26 more per 1000 (from 53 fewer to 105 more)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ HIGH	IMPORTANT
Serious adverse events - Treatment-related serious adverse events (follow-up 2 months)												
1	randomised trials	serious[1]	no serious inconsistency	no serious indirectness	very serious[3]	none	0/129 (0%)	0.8%	RR 0.31 (0.01 to 7.61)	6 fewer per 1000 (from 8 fewer to 53 more)	⊕OOO VERY LOW	IMPORTANT
Adverse events - Mood change (follow-up 2-6 months)												
2	randomised trials	serious[1]	no serious inconsistency	no serious indirectness	no serious imprecision	none	14/148 (9.5%)	42.3%	RR 0.22 (0.13 to 0.37)	330 fewer per 1000 (from 266 fewer to 368 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕O MODERATE	IMPORTANT
Adverse events - Blood glucose problem (follow-up 2-6 months)												
2	randomised trials	no serious risk of bias	no serious inconsistency	no serious indirectness	serious[3]	none	24/148 (16.2%)	29.9%	RR 0.54 (0.35 to 0.85)	138 fewer per 1000 (from 45 fewer to 194 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕O MODERATE	IMPORTANT
Adverse events - Sleep change (follow-up 2-6 months)												
2	randomised trials	serious[1]	no serious inconsistency	no serious indirectness	no serious imprecision	none	10/148 (6.8%)	33.2%	RR 0.19 (0.1 to 0.36)	269 fewer per 1000 (from 212 fewer to 299 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕O MODERATE	IMPORTANT
Adverse events - Increased appetite (follow-up 2-6 months)												
2	randomised trials	serious[1]	no serious inconsistency	no serious indirectness	no serious imprecision	none	7/148 (4.7%)	24.1%	RR 0.2 (0.09 to 0.44)	193 fewer per 1000 (from 135 fewer to 219 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕O MODERATE	IMPORTANT
Adverse events - Earache (follow-up 2-6 months)												

2	randomised trials	serious[1]	no serious inconsistency	no serious indirectness	no serious imprecision	none	74/148 (50%)	1.7%	RR 15.68 (6.22 to 39.49)	250 more per 1000 (from 89 more to 654 more)	⊕⊕⊕O MODERATE	IMPORTANT
Adverse events - Injection site pain (follow-up 2-6 months)												
2	randomised trials	serious[1]	no serious inconsistency	no serious indirectness	no serious imprecision	none	37/148 (25%)	0%	RR 36.8 (4.99 to 271.62)	-	⊕⊕⊕O MODERATE	IMPORTANT
Adverse events - Mouth dryness/thirst (follow-up 2-6 months)												
2	randomised trials	serious[1]	no serious inconsistency	no serious indirectness	no serious imprecision	none	5/148 (3.4%)	24.9%	RR 0.15 (0.06 to 0.35)	212 fewer per 1000 (from 162 fewer to 234 fewer)	⊕⊕⊕O MODERATE	IMPORTANT
Adverse events - Weight gain (follow-up 2-6 months)												
2	randomised trials	serious[1]	no serious inconsistency	no serious indirectness	serious[3]	none	7/148 (4.7%)	16.6%	RR 0.28 (0.13 to 0.61)	120 fewer per 1000 (from 65 fewer to 144 fewer)	⊕⊕OO LOW	IMPORTANT
Adverse events - Dizziness/vertigo (follow-up 6 months)												
1	randomised trials	no serious risk of bias	no serious inconsistency	no serious indirectness	no serious imprecision	none	35/129 (27.1%)	10.7%	RR 2.53 (1.41 to 4.54)	164 more per 1000 (from 44 more to 379 more)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ HIGH	IMPORTANT
Adverse events - Ear infection (follow-up 6 months)												
1	randomised trials	serious[1]	no serious inconsistency	no serious indirectness	very serious[3]	none	7/129 (5.4%)	1.7%	RR 3.28 (0.7 to 15.49)	39 more per 1000 (from 5 fewer to 246 more)	⊕OOO VERY LOW	IMPORTANT
Adverse events - Tympanic membrane perforation (follow-up 6 months)												
1	randomised trials	serious[1]	no serious inconsistency	no serious indirectness	very serious[3]	none	5/129 (3.9%)	0%	OR 7.17 (1.22 to 42.01)	-	⊕OOO VERY LOW	IMPORTANT

[1] Downgraded by 1 increment if the majority of the evidence was at high risk of bias, and downgraded by 2 increments if the majority of the evidence was at very high risk of bias.
[2] Downgraded by 1 or 2 increments because of heterogeneity, I2>50%, p<0.04, unexplained by subgroup analysis.
[3] Downgraded by 1 increment if the confidence interval crossed one MID or by 2 increments if the confidence interval crossed both MIDs.