Reviewer's report

**Title:** Balance algorithm for cluster randomized trials

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 18 June 2008

**Reviewer:** Vance Berger

**Reviewer's report:**

The problem considered, specifically weighing balance against predictability, has been treated in some detail. Are you merely reinventing the wheel? To clarify what it is that you are contributing, above and beyond what has already been done, you need to frame your contribution in terms of what has already been done, and what remains to be done. This would require you to be aware of what has already been done. To this end, I refer you to the following:


In addition, the abstract mentions a powerful tool. In statistical jargon, power generally refers to a test, or an analysis, and its ability to detect alternatives of interest. In what sense is this tool powerful? Do you perhaps mean that it is convenient? In the next sentence, you tell the reader that the "method outlines
ways". Are ways different from methods? Perhaps more precise terminology would clarify for the reader what exactly it is that is being stated. Did you mean that the tool outlines methods for incorporating trade-offs?

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.