Reviewer's report

**Title:** Spirulina platensis versus silymarin in the treatment of chronic hepatitis C virus infection. A pilot randomized, comparative clinical trial.

**Version:** 3  **Date:** 6 February 2012

**Reviewer:** John H Kalbfleisch

Reviewer's report:

These comments follow a request for statistical review. The statistical procedures are correct. The current presentation of results will awkward for some readers. I offer some suggestions the authors can consider.

Major Compulsory Revisions – none.

Minor Essential Revisions – none.

Discretionary Revisions

(1)
For the key outcome events I suggest showing a figure that displays individual measurements of the patients in both study groups at baseline, 3 months, and 6 months. Viral load measures could be plotted on a log-scale. ALT, CLDQ and ASEX can be shown on a scale as they were recorded. Group mean levels can be superimposed on the plots. Lines connecting values (base, 3m, 6m) in each patient will show readers trends in addition to only the general change of group mean levels.

(2)
Table 7 can be shown in an appendix (author choice), and the 2 measures (CDLQ, ASEX) should be shown separately (Table 7a, 7b). Further, the results implied by Table 7 can be better illustrated to the reader by presenting the unadjusted group means and the covariate-adjusted group means (it looks like will indicate a common conclusion).

(3) Was there a differential effect for M and F on the outcomes?

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests.
John H. Kalbfleisch, Ph.D.