Reviewer's report

Title: Treatment of children and adolescents with ulcerative colitis by adsorptive depletion of myeloid lineage leucocytes as monotherapy or in combination with low dose prednisolone after failure of first-line medications

Version: 3 Date: 10 July 2013

Reviewer: Anastasia Konidari

Reviewer's report:

Minor essential reviews

Version 2 is much improved.

More emphasis however needs to be given to the limitations of this review due to the small and highly selected sample size, which does not allow for generalisation of conclusions, unless further double blinded randomised controlled trials can be conducted.

Furthermore, it would be essential to have a fourth group of patients who have had corticosteroids for induction of remission, so as to directly assess superiority of GMA over a recognised first line treatment for induction of remission.

As no such comparison has been carried out, the superiority of induction of remission with GMA treatment must not be inferred and will remain doubtful. The last sentence in the conclusions section of the abstract needs therefore to be amended and this change should be reflected within the body of the manuscript.

Clearly a number of patients with higher CAI score required adjunct therapy with corticosteroids to go into remission; how long is it ethical to wait until adding corticosteroids to GMA treatment, in case of suboptimal response to this treatment or increased disease activity? How was the time point, at which corticosteroid treatment was added to one of the three groups in the study, decided? Compared groups had differences in disease severity, therefore validity of conclusions drawn about superiority of GMA over pharmacotherapy may be weak unless further research is conducted.

Finally, although the maintenance of remission was not the objective of this study, it is of high clinical importance to assess how GMA treatment for induction of remission may affect disease course in short to medium term at least.

Please note last sentence in 'subgroup analyses' section; it should read 'score' not 'core'.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests