Reviewer's report

Title: Child-Pugh score is superior to model for end-stage liver disease score (MELD) in predicting survival on and need for removal from waiting list in patients awaiting liver transplantation

Version: 1 Date: 28 May 2009

Reviewer: Michael A Fink

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions:
1. The crux of the paper is the comparison of CTP and MELD score with respect to prediction of waiting list mortality. The paper asserts that CTP is superior in this regard. However, statistical analysis to support this is not presented. I think that it is essential that the C-statistic for CTP and MELD are given and a P value for the comparison be given.
2. Optimal cut-offs for CTP and MELD are given, but the method of determining these is not described. This should be corrected.
3. The first 2 paragraphs of the discussion reproduce information contained in the introduction. These should be removed from the paper. They could be replaced by a very brief summary of the introduction.
4. Tables 5a and 5b do not contribute any substantial additional information and are not further considered in the paper. They should be removed.

Minor essential revisions:
1. There are some minor grammatical issues that need to be corrected. For example, Results page 1, last paragraph: "Of 29 patients died or removed..." should read "Of 29 patients who died or were removed..."
2. Discussion page 1, 3rd paragraph: "In our study that compromised ..." should read "In our study that comprised ...
2. Discussion, page 2, 1st paragraph: "indicating, that patient with compensated cirrhosis" should read "indicating that patients with compensated cirrhosis"

Discretionary revisions:
1. The mean MELD score of all patients in the study was 14.2. This seems relatively low. It has previously been demonstrated that below a MELD score of 15, patients have a higher risk of death from transplantation than waiting list death (Merion et al Am J Transpl 2005;5:307-13). This issue deserves some consideration in the discussion.
2. The authors assert that other studies evaluating MELD and CTP "did not take into account patients removed from the waiting list due to poor condition". In fact, in one paper evaluating risk factors, including CTP and MELD, for waiting list mortality, patients who were listed for transplantation and were removed from the
waiting list due to poor condition and subsequently died were included in the waiting list mortality group (Fink et al. J Gastroenterol Hepatol. 2007;22:119-24)

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

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

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.