Reviewer’s report

Title: Rate and determinants of treatment response to different antiretroviral combination strategies in subjects presenting at HIV-1 diagnosis with advanced disease.

Version: 1 Date: 2 November 2011

Reviewer: Raphaël Porcher

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have satisfactorily answered several of my comments, and the manuscript has been improved. Some points should however be considered.

Minor essential revisions

1. In table 1, estimating a proportion with a 95% CI is correct for immunovirological success (binary endpoint), but not for switch which is a censored endpoint. The estimated probability at a predefined timepoint estimated by Kaplan Meier should be given instead, with its 95% CI.

2. Presenting 95% confidence intervals for the proportions is not a way to summarize categorical variables (the count and percentage are sufficient for that). The 95% confidence intervals are not descriptive but inferential statistics. This could be made clearer in the methods.

3. Table 1, the association measure presented for switch is not odds ratio but hazard ratio, if the methods are exact.

4. It would be preferable to present hazard ratios and odds ratios in tables 1 and 3 with the same reference category (e.g. age < 50 or age > 50, but not age < 50 in table 1 and age > 50 in table 3).

Discretionary Revisions

1. I still believe percentages should be rounded to the nearest integer. Given the sample size, 0.5% does even not correspond to one single patient.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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